

Greece drops threat to expel Syrian

ATHENS (R) — Greece dropped a threat to expel a Syrian diplomat Monday after it received an explanation from Damascus about comments he made on political violence. Greece had received assurances from Syria that the controversy over a letter to a Greek newspaper by its economic counsellor Muhammad Al Sayed was a result of a printing error, government spokesman Byron Polydoros said. "The Greek government considers these explanations to be satisfactory and considers the matter closed," he added. Sayed, posted in Athens since 1976, wrote the letter to deny allegations in a newspaper report that he was involved in guerrilla activity. In the letter he said he was "a scientist and a religious man and naturally I do not entirely reject all forms of violence in political activity."

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Arafat seeks support for summit

KUWAIT (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat arrived in Kuwait Monday to seek support for an Arab summit to discuss Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel. Palestinian officials said Arafat also held talks with the Emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, on the Palestinian uprising. Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah said last night Kuwait backed a PLO call for an Arab League summit. Arafat arrived from Saudi Arabia, where he met King Fahd Sunday night in Mecca after performing a minor pilgrimage.

Turkey explains AWACS flight

ANKARA (R) — Turkey said a recent flight by an American AWACS jet, which Iraq alleged was close to its border, was in fact a NATO flight over Turkish territory hundreds of kilometres from the frontier. The Iraqi Foreign Ministry summoned the U.S. charge d'affaires in Baghdad last Saturday to explain a flight by a U.S. AWACS (airborne warning and control system) plane. "The flight mentioned by Iraq was by an AWACS plane of the NATO alliance and was made 300 kilometres from Iraq's borders," acting Foreign Minister's spokesman Ferhat Ataman said. He said the flight was routine. "There is no aspect of the flight which should disturb the Iraqi authorities," Ataman said. The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said April 21 that the plane flew for seven hours in Turkish airspace close to the Iraqi frontier.

Namibia becomes 169th U.N. member

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The fledgling nation of Namibia was admitted to the United Nations by acclamation Monday as its 169th member, a month after attaining independence from South Africa. The Namibian delegation received a tumultuous ovation as a delegation led by Prime Minister Hage Geingob took its seat in the gold and blue General Assembly hall. Namibia became independent March 21 after years of struggle against South African rule and a year-long operation by thousands of U.N. troops and civilians to monitor the territory's transition to statehood.

19 killed in rocket barrage on Kabul

ISLAMABAD (R) — Nineteen people were killed and 11 wounded when guerrillas fighting the Soviet-backed Afghan government fired rockets into Kabul Monday, Kabul Radio said. One of four surface-to-surface missiles fired by rebels landed near Haji Yaqub mosque in central Kabul killing 15 people, the official broadcast, monitored in Islamabad said. Three people were killed in a house hit by a rocket and three more died elsewhere in the capital.

U.S. denies visa to PFLP official

TUNIS (R) — The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) said Monday the United States had denied one of its leaders a visa to attend meetings of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. A PFLP statement said Taysir Qubaa, a member of the PFLP political bureau, was to have gone to New York as part of the Palestinian delegation. It did not say where he applied for a visa or when the United States refused to issue one.

7 killed in Israeli air collision

TEL AVIV (R) — Seven Israeli soldiers were killed when two military helicopters collided in mid-air during training over the occupied West Bank Sunday night, the army said Monday. The U.S.-made Sikorsky CH-53 transport helicopters crashed in darkness at 9:40 p.m. (1840 GMT) Sunday night but military censors withheld news of the accident until Monday. It was the worst Israeli air accident since 1977, when 54 soldiers were killed in a helicopter crash.

Two boys shot dead in Gaza, Hebron

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Two Palestinian boys shot by Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories died of their wounds Monday, Israeli and Palestinian sources said. Soldiers shot and injured Musa Al Alani, 14, in the West Bank village of Beit Ummar near Hebron Sunday evening and he died in a Jerusalem hospital of wounds, the sources told Reuters.

The second boy, 10-year-old Yousef Kishawi, was shot in the head by Israeli troops at Shati refugee camp in the occupied Gaza Strip. He died in an Israeli hospital Monday, military sources said. Hours after the clashes between troops and Palestinians in Beit Ummar Sunday when Alani was wounded, unidentified assailants near the village opened fire on an Israeli bus and wounded one passenger in the thigh. Security forces imposed a curfew on the area of Beit Ummar and were searching for the assailants.

On Sunday 20 Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip. In Arab-Jerusalem, merchants opened their shops Monday after Palestinian activists cancelled strike calls by the United National Leadership of the Uprising. A strike to show Christian-Muslim solidarity was called for Sunday in the wake of a recent move by Jews to set up a settlement in the Christian quarter of Jerusalem's Old City. A second day of strikes was called for Monday in support of "liberated" villages.

The two-day strike order, contained in the latest unified leadership leaflet, has angered many Palestinians because it comes in the middle of the shopping period before the three-day 'Eid Al Fitr holiday later this week. On Sunday, activists in the West Bank towns of Nablus, Tulkarem and Qalqilya issued counter leaflets cancelling the strike order, and Jerusalem joined Monday. The strikes were observed elsewhere in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

It was the first time since the start of the uprising in December 1987 that local activists have disobeyed closure calls by their underground leaders.

Swiss hostages to be released soon

SIDON, Lebanon (Agencies) — A Sunni Muslim militia leader said Monday two kidnapped Swiss relief workers working for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) would be freed soon.

"This crisis will end in the nearest future," Mustapha Saad, the chief of the Popular Liberation Army (PLA) which controls the southern city of Sidon told Visnews television news agency. He said they could be freed by the first day of the 'Eid Al Fitr. The two are believed held by Palestinians belonging to the Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC), led by Abu Nidal. The group has denied any links with

Jordan urges change in ACC approach to oil

By Salameh B. Ne'matt
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The oil and energy ministers of Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and North Yemen opened a meeting here Monday and called for a better exploitation of oil and gas resources in the service of Arab strategic interests and national security in the face of international challenges. Jordan's Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Thabet Taher told the meeting that the four member states of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) need to change their concept of dealing with oil and gas resources as only a material for export and to link such resources to economic development.

"We must deal with the issue of energy as a matter of long-term strategic security and economic development instead of dealing with it on a daily basis," Taher said. He said the prevailing international political climate "reveals clearly, more than ever, that the Arab Nation, as a group or individual states, lives a state of confrontation in all aspects." He added that these challenges "cannot be confronted except through a unified strategic framework, which requires more coordination and cooperation among Arab states on the production level."

Iraqi Oil Minister Issam Chahabi said the Amman meeting carried

more importance because "it is held at a time when the vicious campaign against Iraq, launched by Israel and the imperialist powers led by the U.S. and Britain."

He said that "this unjust campaign calls on us for more caution and solidarity, towards building an independent oil and energy industry, and to direct our efforts to realise our potentials by the optimum use of our resources."

Taher noted in his speech that despite the fact that the Arab states possess 60 per cent of the world's oil reserves and 22 per cent of gas reserves, consumption in the Arab World amounts to four per cent of world consumption, while the Arab population is two per cent of the world population.

He pointed out that Arab states possess only a small percentage of world reserves of commercial energy in which gas and oil represent only 15 per cent. "This means that continuing world dependence on these main resources (oil and gas) will lead to the depletion of oil and then gas, which will make Arab states, whose exports represent 54 per cent of world exports, and less of gas, within 40 years, importers of energy," Taher said.

He warned that "if we looked at energy consumption in Arab states between 1984 and 1988, we would find that it increased with an annual rate of 5.4 per cent despite the econo-

mic slowdown witnessed in the region."

He said this percentage was relatively very high compared with consumption rates in developing countries which range around 3.5 per cent.

He explained that production chances available for the Arabs are less than fifth of the chances available for people in industrial states.

ACC Assistant Secretary General Hisham Hassan Tawfiq said in an open speech earlier that cooperation among member states "has positive implications on solidifying national security of these states as well as serving the Arab Nation's national security in general."

Tawfiq said that the council's political and security achievements in the first year "are no less important than achievements in the economic field."

He pointed out to solidarity expressed by member states vis-a-vis the Western media campaign against Iraq in the last few weeks.

Taher urged the oil ministers to "recognise the importance of the concept of production and economic infrastructure by linking them through institutions with cooperation towards Arab economic integration, on the level of ACC states as well as on the comprehensive Arab level."

The minister called for the establishment of a unified Arab energy market to operate first at the level of

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Reformists set up 'democratic bloc' in federation of unions

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The formation of a "reformist" bloc within the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions (FJLU) was announced Monday afternoon subsequent to the withdrawal Sunday of 10 member unions from the 217-member organisation's election of its executive committee.

The birth of the Democratic Union Bloc was announced by Haidar Rashid, president of the Banking, Insurance and Accounting Employees Association, at its headquarters in Jabal Hussein Monday afternoon.

"We are forming this bloc in protest the excesses and violations of the statutes of the federation by the executive committee and its encroachment on the authority of the 95-member central council," Rashid told union members and journalists attending the press conference.

Rashid contended that the 14-member executive committee and the make-up of the central council were "unrepresentative" of Jordanian workers and that the

course of action that the present executive committee plans to take does not reflect the "will of the Jordanian workers."

Rashid said that a 10-member committee, representing the 10 unions that refused to take part in Sunday night's elections, would lead the bloc in the federation's discussions and deliberations. He named himself and Khalil Abu Khurma, president of the Public Services Union, as president and vice president of the bloc. The other eight members all currently hold the post of president of their respective unions.

A memorandum announcing the formation of the bloc outlined the bloc's main demands for change and reform in the FJLU.

The memo: — Contested the legality of the present executive committee and declared all decisions taken by it as null and void;

— Called for freezing the membership of the present leadership of the federation in all local, pan-Arab and international organisations and forums;

— Called for freezing all funds of the federation because the bloc

is contesting the committee's handling of its finances;

— Called for an immediate investigation into the committee's dealings, financial and otherwise.

— Called on the members of the federation who have not violated the labour law to serve as a caretaker committee which would supervise and monitor the "transitional" period pending reform.

The bloc also announced that it was not the equivalent of a "disseminating" movement and "does not reflect differences in political currents within the federation or unions."

"We are concerned with principles not politics," said Rashid. "Incorrect and irresponsible practices and excesses have characterised this federation for too long. It must now live up to the democratic standards being set in the rest of the country and shape up," he added.

The federation was formed in 1952 and grew to represent up to 22 labour and trade unions in Jordan by 1976. A change in the

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Bush invites King to visit

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein received Monday a telephone call from U.S. President George Bush in which the two leaders exchanged views on a number of issues, particularly the Middle East problem and other issues in the region. President Bush extended an invitation to His Majesty to visit Washington while attending the next session of the United Nations General Assembly.



Bush also congratulated the King on 'Eid Al Fitr feast. The King congratulated Bush on



Easter and on the release of American hostage Robert Polhill in Lebanon.

Churches in Holy Land to close to protest at settlers

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The major Christian shrines of the Holy Land will close for day and night a funeral toll from their belltowers to protest a Jewish settlement in the Old City's Christian quarters, church leaders said Monday.

The announcement by the leaders of 10 religions in the Holy Land came a day after the Israeli government confirmed it secretly put up \$1.8 million to help finance the settlement of 150 Jews near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The church leaders, who held a news conference to announce the protest scheduled for Friday, said Israeli government support for the settlement "endangers the survival of all Christian communities in the Holy City."

"We demand respect of the privileges and rights which the Christians have in the Holy Land," Greek Orthodox Patriarch Diodoros I told the news conference.

Friday's protest will be the first time that all Christian Holy places close, said the Rt. Rev. Samir Kabbil, Anglican bishop of Jerusalem. The church leaders included Roman Catholic, Coptic and Lutheran officials.

Among the Christian sites to be closed are Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity and the

Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth.

The Israeli bailiff's office gave Jewish settlers occupying the compound 48 hours' notice of eviction Monday.

Police sources said the order was issued at the request of the Greek Orthodox Church, which owns St. John's Hospice.

However they said the settlers could appeal and were unlikely to be evicted rapidly.

The settlement of Jews in a compound owned by the Greek Orthodox Church April 11 has set off angry demonstrations by Christian clerics and Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim.

Palestinian Christians complained that the settlers' move threatened the traditional separation of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish quarters of the Old City.

The Greek Church, which says a former tenant illegally leased the compound, got an order to have the Jews evicted. The supreme court will hold a second session on an appeal of the order Thursday.

The Israeli government acknowledged that it helped finance the settlement as the first confirmation of official involvement in purchasing Arab property in Jerusalem's Old City.

The move came amid a spate of settlement building, including Monday's setting up of mobile homes at Dugit, a new settlement

in the occupied Gaza Strip. The government has also authorised expansion of settlement in the occupied West Bank.

The government money for the Old City settlement was funnelled to a Panamanian company called SBC that rented the buildings to the settlers.

A statement signed by the church leaders said the settlement and police guards around it provokes violence. They said that "freedom of access to the Holy Sepulchre and freedom of worship within it have been threatened."

The Christian leaders said the church will hold the protest regardless of the decision by the supreme court.

The church closure will be in effect between 9 a.m. (0900 GMT) Friday and an unspecified time Saturday, and church bells will toll on the hour from 9 a.m. until noon Friday. But both Diodoros I and Kabbil said the closure may be longer than announced.

An Israeli legislator who exposed the secret financing has demanded that the money be recovered.

Yossi Sarid of the opposition Citizens Rights Movement appealed to Israel's attorney general and state comptroller "to see to it that the money is returned to the state treasury as soon as possible."

Aoun extends hand to Syria

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's defiant Christian General Michel Aoun extended a conciliatory hand to Syria Monday and said he was preparing to crush his rivals in a bitter battle for control of east Beirut.

"Our hands are always and under all circumstances stretched for negotiations with Syria within the common interest and brotherly relations between Lebanon and Syria," Aoun told a news conference at his headquarters in the suburb of Baabda.

In west Beirut, meanwhile, the head of the Syrian-backed Amal militia announced a unilateral ceasefire in the inter-Shi'ite war with the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God).

Aoun, who last year launched an unsuccessful six-month "war of liberation" against the 40,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon, has rejected the authority of internationally recognised President Elias Hrawi, saying Hrawi is a Syrian puppet.

The general's 15,000 troops are locked in a three-month-old conflict for dominance in Lebanon's Christian enclave with Samir Geagea's 10,000-strong Lebanese Forces (LF) militia.

At his news conference, Aoun said the confrontation in the Christian enclave would soon be settled.

"I have promised the people some surprises and they should monitor the situation on the ground," he said. "The issue should be settled... all means to settle it are available."

The 54-year-old general refused to give further details.

Labour loses hope of forming coalition

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's Labour Party said it had virtually lost hope of forming a government after a key religious faction sided with right-wing Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

"Probably we wouldn't have the ability to form a coalition," Labour negotiator Moshe Shahal told reporters Monday in the gloomiest assessment to date.

He said party leader Shimon Peres might notify President Chaim Herzog Tuesday or Wednesday that Labour was unable to find a majority in the 120-seat parliament.

Peres' mandate to form a government expires Thursday and Herzog is then expected to ask Shamir to try.

The religious Shas party, with five seats in parliament, said Sunday it would back a government led by Shamir's Likud Party after the prime minister pledged to work towards Palestinian elections in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

However aides stressed Shamir made no comment to accept U.S. proposals for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in Cairo — the issue that broke up his "national unity" government in March.

They said Shamir, caretaker prime minister after losing a parliamentary vote of confidence March 15, would try to form a narrow Likud-led coalition and then offer Labour seats in a renewed "national unity" government on his own terms.

Peres said Labour would not join such a cabinet unless it accepted U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's peace proposals.

"I think the situation now shows Likud had the majority to form a government and I hope we will succeed as soon as Mr. Shamir is appointed to the task," Likud Environment Minister Roni Milo told Israel Radio.

Both Shamir and Peres have

been courting the Shas (Sephardic Torah Guardians) party which holds five seats in the 120-member parliament. Shas' decision to back Shamir Sunday gives him 60 votes, enough to block the approval of any government Peres presents.

Peres, however, did not rule out his chances of forming a coalition before the deadline.

"I have five more days. We are so used to upheavals if five days. Wait and see," he said on army radio.

Prior to the decision of the Shas Torah sages, Shamir met with his spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadia Yosef to clarify his stance on the peace process, Israel TV reported.

Interior Minister Aryeh Deeri of Shas said Shamir had presented Yosef with a formula that had satisfied the rabbi's desire for advancing the peace process without giving Baker a positive answer.

"Who said that 'yes' to Baker was the absolute way to advance the peace process? There are other ways to advance the peace process," he said on Israel TV.

Speaking after the meeting of the Torah sages, Deeri said they had been authorised to work out a formal agreement for supporting a Shamir-led coalition.

"Rabbi Yosef and the Torah sages were convinced by the prime minister's desire and by his unequivocal announcement that he will not retreat from the government's peace initiative and his desire to reach peace with our neighbours," Deeri said.

Shamir aide Yossi Achmeir denied Shamir said anything new to Yosef.

"We simply restated his positions that he has said in public on the government's peace process," Achmeir said.

Coup crushed in Sudan

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's military strongman announced that loyalist forces crushed an attempted coup by active-duty and retired military officers early Monday, the second reported attempt in a month to oust the year-old junta.

Informed sources in Khartoum said the army appeared to have had little trouble putting down a series of attacks by junior army officers.

Gen. Omar Hassan Al Bashir told his people of the episode in a speech broadcast at midday over Radio Omdurman, the government's official station.

He said loyalists had arrested the insurgents and restored the government's control. He did not say how many were in custody or give any casualty figures.

"All those involved in the attempt have been arrested, those who are in active service and those who are retired," Bashir said.

Sounding calm, the junta leader said his government had had the plotters under surveillance from the takeover's inception. He said without elaboration that the abortive coup was masterminded by "the alliance in coalition with the outlaws."

"The alliance" could have been a reference to political parties Bashir disbanded after taking power last June 30. Government spokesmen often use "outlaws" to refer to the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) which began in 1983 a rebellion for autonomy in the three regions of southern Sudan.

The sources, who spoke on condition they not be further identified, said the action began at midnight (2200 GMT Sunday). The coupmakers tried to take over Khartoum airport and Radio Omdurman, the government's official radio station, but were quickly overpowered and arrested, the sources said.

They said several officers also tried to shoot their way into the downtown headquarters of the Armed Forces General Command, apparently in search of Bashir. They could not get through the front gate.

A guard at the General Command was wounded in the band, the source said, but there was no further word on casualties. Khartoum airport was closed briefly and telecommunications were cut for several hours. But by mid-morning, life was normal in Khartoum, although rumours were spreading of trouble during the night.

"It was an attempted coup around midnight by a small number of very low-level officers," said a source who said he was told of the abortive coup by people at the General Command.

"They tried to take over the airport and the radio in a rather pathetic way and were very unsuccessful," Tanks were seen on vital bridges and around the General

Command. Guards were fully armed, and the army was said to be on full alert. But in general security was not increased on the streets of the capital.

The number of arrests was not immediately known. Egypt's Middle East News Agency reported that the army planned to issue a statement on the incident.

In a dispatch from Khartoum, the agency said the coup involved junior officers but was masterminded by some retired officers. It did not identify those involved.

The agency said the government shut down Khartoum airport and cut communications with the outside at 4:30 a.m. (0230 GMT) Monday, apparently because of the attempt. The airport was reopened and communications resumed at 7 a.m. (0500 GMT), it said.

It quoted a source at the General Command as saying: "The situation has been brought under control." The agency said Bashir and members of his 15-man junta followed measures to thwart the takeover attempt from command headquarters.

In late March, Khartoum's official Sudan News Agency reported that a number of civilians and military officers were arrested for allegedly planning a coup.

Later, Bashir was quoted as saying that only 20 people were involved and that investigations were under way. The junta came to power last June 30

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Former Kuwaiti MPs reject offer to reopen parliament

MANAMA (AP) — The speaker and 32 former members of Kuwait's dissolved parliament Monday rejected a proposal by the Emir of Kuwait for reopening the house with one third of its members appointed.

In a statement telefaxed to Western news agencies the former speaker, Ahmad Al Saud, declared in the name of 32 other former members that the new proposal was unconstitutional.

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, in an apparent bid to placate dissident members of the parliament dissolved in 1986, issued a decree Sunday night setting up a 75-member "transitional" legislature.

The decree said that 50 members of the body, to be called "the National Council," would be elected by secret ballot, with another 25 appointed by the government. There was no date set for the elections.

The council would have a four-year term during which "it will appraise our parliamentary experiment and propose steps for our future march of democracy," said the Emir in a nation-wide radio and television address.

He said the decision emanated from "my historic responsibility and keenness on the stability and national unity of our people."

Pro-government newspapers hailed the development. Ahmad Jarallah, the widely read editor of Al-Sayassah, wrote: "Kuwait's ship... has now reached safely ashore."

The captain did not impose a non-Kuwaiti formula counter to Kuwaiti conventions. He did not resort to tanks or jails.

But some former deputies promptly rejected the proposal as an attempt to perpetuate the suspension of Kuwait's 1962 constitution envisaging a 50-



Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah member elected legislature.

The constitution however, also allows cabinet ministers, not exceeding a third of the parliament members, to have voting rights during its debates.

Saud's statement said: "The National Council whose formation has been declared, has no place in the constitutional makeup."

"Its continuation for four years is but a continuation of the suspension of the constitution."

The activists spearheaded a campaign late last year for the restoration of the dissolved parliament. It was the only democratically elected body in the Middle East.

The body was dissolved following the sharp criticism by some deputies of government ministers.

The same situation had prompted an earlier earlier dissolution in 1976 for a four-year hiatus.

Stressing commitment to democracy as a way of life, the Emir ordered his Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah in January to conduct a nationwide dialogue on a new formula that would avoid repetition of the earlier developments.

The Emir's decree came less than a week after Sheikh Saad presented to him a report on the outcome of his contacts with representatives of all sections of Kuwaiti society, including the 32 former activist deputies.

Sheikh Jaber said the decision to set up the new body was prompted by the "variety of opinions which should be considered carefully in order to choose the best for our society while benefiting from our previous experiments."

He also cited "the preservation of national unity and refusing any attempt to undermine stability." Regional and Middle East circumstances "should boost our solidarity and collaboration so as to avert any secession and its sinister effects which are still present," he added.

This was a reference to a spate of sabotage attacks by pro-Iranian groups in the course of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and tension on the Arab-Israeli front.

The Emir insisted his decision was "not to surmount an obstacle or deal with an interim attitude but rather to channel all effort for building up a real future structure without allowing side differences to thwart it."

In the preamble to the decree he also said the decision was intended to avert "the drawbacks of the previous parliamentary experiments and to ensure closer cooperation between various constitutional powers."

The decree said the 25 appointed members would include a number of ministers. The National Council, with a four-year term, to review the annual state budget, will be empowered to question the government and will control the state auditing system.

The body will be able to enact legislation, but the decree stated that "all laws will not go into effect unless endorsed by the Emir."

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Afghan rebels call for non-party elections

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Afghanistan's guerrillas agreed Monday to let President Najibullah test his popularity in nationwide elections, if the United Nations and organization of Islamic countries conducted the balloting.

The vague proposal for a non-party election represented a major concession by the seven Pakistan-based guerrilla groups that have fought for 12 years to overthrow the Soviet-backed government in Kabul.

"We're talking about general elections and that means everybody can participate," said Azim Nasser-Zia, a spokesman for the rebel National Islamic Front of Afghanistan.

The group, considered moderate, proposed the election plan. Other rebel groups supported the plan.

It drew a cool response, however, from the Kabul government's highest-ranking diplomat in Pakistan, charge d'affaires Qudrullah Ahmad.

"We gave our proposal three years ago for a six-month ceasefire followed by elections. We are ready for those elections," Ahmad said. The guerrillas have rejected the ceasefire.

"They'll eventually come over to our proposal," he said. The guerrillas have fought among themselves in recent years. They have come under heavy pressure from the United States and other financial backers to close ranks and come up with a political solution to the pro-

tracted war. "A political solution will never come until we are strong on the battlefield," Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, president of the rebels' self-proclaimed government-in-exile, said when asked if the guerrillas had given up on a military settlement.

Some rebel figures say the talk of elections is a stall tactic by hardliners preparing for new military assaults after the spring thaw. The warmer weather is melting snow on Afghanistan's rugged mountain passes, allowing rebel fighters to resupply their positions inside the country.

Senior U.S. officials in Islamabad said guerrilla leaders have been warned their multimillion dollar weapons pipeline could dry up next year.

Washington annually ships up to \$700 million worth of military supplies to the guerrillas, who are also financed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other Arab states. Moscow reportedly pumps billions of dollars worth of supplies to the Afghan government.

When Moscow withdrew its combat troops from Afghanistan last year, Western diplomats and guerrilla leaders predicted Najibullah and his government would fall within months.

A year later, the guerrillas control nearly 80 per cent of the countryside but have yet to capture a major city. Najibullah's forces have failed to make significant military gains, leading to calls for a political settlement.

Ethiopian air raid on Massawa claims 55 lives

NAIROBI (R) — Bombing raids by the Ethiopian Air Force killed 55 people in the rebel-held port of Massawa Sunday, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) said.

Soviet-built jet bombers staged two raids on the strategic Red Sea port, killing 55 people and seriously injuring 111, the EPLF said in a statement telefaxed to Reuters from London Monday.

The air raids, during which cluster bombs and heavy demolition bombs were dropped, were witnessed by two visiting foreign journalists, the statement said.

This was the fifth time air force jets had bombed Massawa since the EPLF seized the port in February, cutting off supplies to the government-held area of Eritrea province, it added.

FAO seeks opening of Massawa Port

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) appealed Monday for Massawa to be reopened for food aid and shipments to northern Ethiopia, where an officially estimated 4.5 million victims of drought and civil war risk starvation this year.

The EPLF has offered to open Massawa for a U.N.-supervised relief operation to feed famine victims in both government and rebel-held areas.

But Ethiopia's Soviet-backed government has vetoed the plan, calling instead for an emergency airlift of food to the Eritrean provincial capital Asmara, which is still in government hands.

"Unless the port of Massawa becomes operational in the near future, widespread hunger and death from starvation is inevitable," FAO said in its latest report on food supply in sub-Saharan Africa.

The FAO report also recommended an airlift to ease immediate food shortages in Eritrea, where the government-held area has been reduced to a landlocked enclave surrounded by rebel forces, but added that aircraft alone could not move the 30,000 tonnes of food per month needed

to avoid disaster in the province. Relief sources in Nairobi said U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar was expected to launch a special appeal for Ethiopian famine victims Wednesday.

The Ethiopian government estimates that 4.5 million people face possible starvation in northern Ethiopia this year due to the combined effects of drought and civil war. About half of them live in rebel-controlled areas.

Relief workers say that unless food gets through soon, Ethiopia may face a catastrophe similar to that of 1984-85 when up to one million people starved to death.

"Massawa was the main port for delivering food to northern Ethiopia and the only gateway for supplying government-held areas of Eritrea until its capture by the EPLF."

The government enclave, where about a million people live, now depends totally on supplies flown from elsewhere in Ethiopia.

Recent visitors to Asmara say there is virtually no traffic because of a petrol shortage and water is being distributed by tankers as mains pumps have been turned off to save fuel.

"Cereal stocks will be exhausted within weeks," the FAO report said.

The FAO said some food was getting through to the rebel-held areas of Wollo and Tigray provinces, south of Eritrea, thanks to truck convoys across the battle lines organised by a consortium of church relief agencies.

The Joint Relief Partnership (JRP) began trucking food from Dessie, the capital of Wollo province, into territory held by the rebel Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) last month.

Its operation, which aims to funnel 14,500 tonnes of food each month into the area, has the consent of both the government and TPLF but there is no formal ceasefire.

Food aid is also being trucked into areas controlled by the EPLF and TPLF from neighbouring Sudan, although the FAO did not mention this in its report.

Freed hostage enjoys freedom, breakfast and paper

WIESBADEN, West Germany (Agencies) — American ex-hostage Robert Polhill, freed by kidnappers in Beirut after more than three years, enjoyed his first full day of liberty Monday eating bacon and eggs and reading the New York Times.

As the frail teacher was helped from a military transport plane at the U.S. Rhein-Main Airbase in Frankfurt, hopes rose that another American hostage in Lebanon would soon be freed.

Polhill, released Sunday, immediately boarded a helicopter and was flown to the U.S. military hospital at nearby Wiesbaden for an intensive medical check and debriefing by State Department officials after 1,183 days in captivity.

There, he received a stars-and-stripes welcome from cheering staff and patients. Dozens of American flags fluttered from hospital balconies in the cold morning drizzle and a hand-painted sign said: "Welcome home pray for the others."

The business studies professor was snatched with three other academics from the campus of the Beirut University College. Two American professors are still hostages.

Polhill, who carried an American football given him by the crew of the military transport, flashed a V-for-victory sign before disappearing inside with his Palestinian-born wife Feryal, who flew from Damascus with him.

Two hours later, an official statement said that after a preliminary medical examination, Polhill, 55, "is alert, stable, ambulatory and somewhat tired. Although he appears to be in relatively good shape, he is malnourished and mildly dehydrated."

The statement said he had breakfast of half a grapefruit, scrambled eggs, bacon, English muffin, milk and coffee.

One of the plane crew that flew Polhill to West Germany told Reuters that the former captive smoked cigarettes and read the New York Times during the flight and also spent some time quietly with his wife.

"He didn't want to be treated like a patient," said flight nurse Captain Marjorie Graziano. "But when I told him he looked so pale that I might have given to him oxygen when we reached altitude, he said 'I'm so pale because I haven't seen the sun in three years.'"

Earlier in Damascus, Polhill said his joy was tinged with sadness for other hostages still in Lebanon and he hoped for their early release.

The Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine (IJLP) freed Polhill in Beirut on Sunday. It still holds his fellow professors Alann Steen and Jesse Turner.

They are among 16 other Westerners, including seven Americans, held in Lebanon by pro-Iranian groups seeking political concessions from the West.

As Polhill enjoyed his first night of freedom, the pro-government Tehran Times newspaper called for the release of another American hostage within the week.

An Iranian source told Reuters in Tehran he expected another American to be released by Friday.

He said this should be followed by the release of Israeli Shi'ite Muslim cleric Abdul Karim Obeid, a senior pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) official, abducted by Israeli commandos in South Lebanon last year.

In Beirut, Hussein Musawi, an official of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah, said Monday a second American hostage held in Lebanon could be freed soon if the conditions were right.

"The release (of a second American hostage) is possible but we don't know when, where, how and for what," Musawi told the Communist Voice of the People radio station.

"There should be something in return for such a step and the release of Obeid is not enough," Musawi said.

Obeid is among hundreds of Lebanese Shi'ite Muslims held by Israel. He was snatched by an Israeli commando from his South Lebanon village in July 1989.

The release of the Shi'ites from Israeli jails have been a major demand by pro-Iranian underground groups holding the hostages.

Before boarding the aircraft in Damascus, the 55-year-old college professor had said his unrelenting anger at his captors had kept him alive and sane.

Polhill was the first American hostage to be released in Lebanon in nearly 3 1/2 years, and he said his joy was tempered by the knowledge that seven others were still in captivity.

"I was angry at what was being done to me, being taken away from my wife and family," he told a reporter as he was being driven from Beirut to Damascus after his release. "And so I tried to continue being angry, knowing at all times that if I began to lose that anger I'd just sort of become a vegetable."

Ali Akbar Velayati, the Iranian foreign minister, said in New York after the release that Iran and the Shi'ite movements in Lebanon wanted a prompt reciprocal gesture. He specified the release of Obeid.

But U.S. President George Bush said he was not making any goodwill gesture just because one hostage was freed.

"I want all of those hostages out, we're not going to trade," Bush said. However, in a written statement, Bush expressed thanks to Iran and Syria for efforts leading to Polhill's freedom.

In a Monday editorial the Tehran Times, a paper close to Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani, called for the release of another American hostage.

The Lebanese groups holding another seven Americans and 10 other Westerners in Lebanon "will certainly find it hard to comply with this request and their position is quite understand-

able," the paper said, citing Arab prisoners held by Israel.

"But perhaps the release of one hostage alone will not be enough to establish the kind of overwhelming trust needed to bring the whole hostage crisis to an end."

Though pale and gaunt, Polhill managed to joke with reporters shortly after his release Sunday.

"The first thing I'd like to say is that I'm sorry I kept you waiting so long," he told a news conference at the Syrian Foreign Ministry. "Thirty-nine months is a long time to stand here."

In Washington, White House Press Secretary Martin Fitzwater said the United States had not made any concessions to the abductors, the Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine.

"There are no deals, there are no negotiations with the hostage takers," he said.

In a Syrian TV interview, Polhill said he was grateful to those who helped him, but added: "I'm still deeply concerned about my two friends and others who are still held in the conditions I was held in."

Polhill said he played cards with other hostages during his captivity and tried to keep his mind off the possibility of freedom.

Guards outside the Summerland Hotel who witnessed the release said Polhill stepped out of a car that screamed to a halt about 50 metres from the hotel.

He was immediately picked up by a three-car Syrian convoy

and driven off at high speed. Qadhafi urges release of all hostages

In Libya, Col. Muammar Qadhafi called Sunday for the release of hostages in an appeal to Muslims around the world, the official Libyan News Agency (JANA) said in a dispatch about an hour after the reported release.

"I urge, once again, all those who are holding hostages to release them in fulfillment and application of the tolerant Islamic principles," the agency quoted Qadhafi as saying.

Polhill's mother, Ruth Polhill of Fishkill, New York, was overjoyed at news of the release and the prospect of seeing her son.

"Maybe I'll have control myself by that time," she told the U.S. television network CNN.

In London, friends and relatives of British hostages in Lebanon welcomed the release of Polhill as a "step toward closing the hostage file" and urged the British government to talk to those with influence over the kidnappers.

"We seem to be in a period now where people are being released rather than taken, and of course that is grounds, I would say, for great optimism," said David Waite.

His brother, Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy, disappeared in Beirut in January 1987 while trying to negotiate the release of American hostages.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

13:30	..... Koran
14:00	..... Programme review
14:30	..... Children programmes
15:00	..... News summary in Arabic
15:30	..... Local programme
16:00	..... Agricultural programme
16:30	..... Programme review
17:00	..... News in Arabic
17:30	..... Arabic series
18:00	..... Programme review
18:30	..... Local programme
19:00	..... News summary in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

18:15	..... Des Chiffres Et de Lettres
18:30	..... Documentary
19:00	..... News in Arabic
19:15	..... Aujourd'hui en Jordanie
19:30	..... News in Hebrew
19:45	..... News in Arabic
20:00	..... Charles in Charge
21:10	..... Resurgent Islam
22:00	..... News in English
22:20	..... In the Heat of the Night

PRAYER TIMES

03:26	..... Fajr
04:52	..... (Sunrise) Fajr
06:34	..... Dhuhr
11:24	..... Asr
18:15	..... Maghreb
19:24	..... Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Sweith
Tel. 810740.
Assemblies of God Church, Tel.
632785, 685326.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440.
De la Saule Church Tel. 661757
Terrazans Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annasentation Tel.
623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 625363, Tel.
628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Assian International Church Tel.
685326.
Evangelical Luthern Church Tel.
811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be hot and dry and winds will be noticeably moderate to fresh causing dust in the desert area. In Aqaba, it will be dusty and winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

30,000 to 50,000 expected to join march for peace

By a Jordan Times staff writer

AMMAN — Between 30,000 and 50,000 people are expected to take part in an international peace march from Amman to Jerusalem in June, organisers said Monday.

The peace march, staged "Amman to Jerusalem," is intended to be a "reaffirmation of the Arab and international will and desire for peace in the Middle East," according to Nidal Sukhtian, president of the Jordan chapter of the Washington, D.C.-based American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC).

"It will be the first-ever public demonstration of the longing for peace in this area since Christ marched to Jerusalem 2,000 years ago," Sukhtian told a press conference held at the Amman international stadium football grounds, where the march will begin on June 1. According to Sukhtian, a Jordanian businessman, the message of the march is: "Tear down the walls of fear, suspicion, hatred and greed that reign supreme in the Middle East today."

Sukhtian pointed out that the central slogan of the peace march will be "Palestinian statehood equals peace in the Holy Land," and will urge Israel to open peace negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). However, in answer to a question, he said there was no PLO involvement in the peace march except participation "as any other peace-loving organisation from anywhere in the world."

The political impact of the march, Sukhtian said, "will be mostly on the forces of peace in Israel."

He said ADC research indicated that 57 per cent of Israelis favour "in one way or another, peace in exchange for occupied land." Another 18 per cent, he said, "are sitting on the fence undecided and could be convinced to join the peace camp."

Sukhtian said "hundreds of international peace activists, human rights groups, anti-nuclear and anti-chemical weapon campaigners, religious leaders of all faiths, non-governmental organisations, international celebrities and former government leaders" were expected to take part in

the march, but refused to name any saying "we do not have the green light yet to release their names." "Three thousand to 4,000 non-Arabs are expected in the march," he added.

Informed sources said among potential participants were former American President Jimmy Carter, human rights activist Jesse Jackson, top leaders of several churches, "at least 10 leading Hollywood celebrities," former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, former Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, and senior members of the British Labour Party.

Relying on questions at Monday's press conference, Sukhtian said the organisers were prepared to go ahead and continue to Jerusalem if the Israeli occupation authorities permitted the marchers to cross into the occupied West Bank. "We hope the Israelis will not stop us at the bridge," he said.

He said non-governmental organisations in Israel "had expressed written interest in staging a parallel march to the bridge in a show of support," but he did not know whether the Israeli government would grant permission for the event.

Asked how the ADC viewed another march organised by Jordanian trade unions, scheduled to take place May 14 between a town in the Jordan Valley and the bridge, Sukhtian said: "They (the unions) are welcome, as any other organisation, to join our march." He did not refer to what had been described as differences between the ADC and unions, whose central theme during the march will be "the Palestinians' right to return."

Sukhtian did not give any specific figure as to the budget or estimated cost of the Amman-to-Jerusalem march.

"We are mostly depending upon contributions from members and other donors, but not governments," he said. "However, our main source is the work of volunteers, who are working round the clock to make the event a success. Local businesses have contributed in-kind assistance to the march."

The Jordanian government has approved the peace march, he said, adding that the ADC hoped to request His Majesty King Hussein to address the marchers at the opening ceremony to be held at the Amman international stadium.



Christian clergymen and members of parliament Monday lead a protest march in Amman against Israeli actions in Jerusalem (Petra photo)

Inter-faith group seeks U.S., Soviet action to deter Israel

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — The Muslim and Christian communities in Jordan joined hands Monday to stage a short march through the heart of Amman to register a strong protest with the United States as well as the Soviet Union against Israeli actions in occupied Jerusalem and the April 12 assault by Israeli forces on Christian clergymen in the Holy City, including Greek Orthodox Patriarch Diodoros I.

In identical appeals delivered to the American and Soviet embassies in Amman, the two communities, represented by the General Islamic Congress on Jerusalem, the Catholic Church, the Inter-Islamic Council, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Royal Committee for Jerusalem and the Arab Orthodox Renaissance Society, expressed concern over the Israeli actions in Jerusalem, "especially the occupation of the Orthodox church buildings by extremist Zionist and Jewish settlers encouraged by the Israeli occupation authorities."

"These arbitrary practices call for the big powers, especially your government, to interfere to prevent these aggressions and put an end to the illegal practices taken against the pilgrims' hospice located in the vicinity of the Holy Sepulchre Church, and evacuate these settlers and restore peace to the religious places," the memorandum said. "We regret and condemn the brutal aggressions committed by these groups against His Beatitude the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem," it added.

"We hope that your government would condemn such irresponsible actions which threaten the freedom of worship and comply with the Israeli plan to Judaize the Holy City of Jerusalem and demolish its Muslim and Christian features," it said.

The silent protest action which preceded the delivery of the appeals involved about 100 people holding banners condemning the Israeli violence against the Greek Orthodox patriarch and urging Soviet leader Mikhail Gor-

bachy to grant "equal right of return to Jews and Palestinians." The reference was to the massive influx of Soviet Jews to Israel and possibilities that the bulk of them could be settled in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip at the expense of the Palestinians.

Senior police officers accompanied the marchers from the starting point at the Second Circle in Jabal Amman and about 30 policemen in riot gear were on the alert in front of the American as well as Soviet embassies. Lower House of Parliament members Mansour Murad, Deeb Marji and Bassam Haddadin were among the protesters.

Patrick Theros, the charge d'affaires of the American embassy, crossed over to the other side of the street in front of the diplomatic mission to receive the memorandum from the protesters. Anglican church Bishop Elia Khoury, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee, and Deputy Murad as well as several other clergymen had a brief exchange with the American diplomat, who promised to relay the contents of the memo to the U.S. Administration in Washington.

In their exchange with Mr. Theros, Bishop Khoury blamed the U.S. for Israeli actions in defiance of international norms and practices. "If your government wanted to stop the inhumane Israeli actions, it could," Khoury said. "But, you are the strategic ally of the Israeli government and you are to be blamed first before Israel."

At the Soviet diplomatic mission, it appeared that no senior diplomat was available to meet the protesters. The memo was handed over at the gate of the mission after about 10 minutes of silent vigil on the side of the street.

It was the second protest staged in Amman in 10 days against Israeli actions in Jerusalem. A candle-light vigil was held April 13 in front of the American embassy, and a memo addressed to U.S. President George Bush was handed over to

Diodoros thanks King

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday received a cable of thanks from Patriarch Diodoros I of Jerusalem, who was subjected an assault by Israeli forces 10 days ago. The patriarch thanked the King for his statements denouncing the April 12 attack on Christian clergymen and Christian and Muslim shrines in Jerusalem.

The patriarch voiced appreciation to the King for the support he gives to the patriarchate and lauded King Hussein's dedication in defending its right. He expressed pride in the honourable and longstanding positions the Hashemite family always adopted since the days of the Caliph Omar Ibn Al Khattab. He recalled the strong ties between the Hashemite family and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, which is considered one of the Jordanian religious institutions in Jerusalem.

The church officials said they were waiting for the outcome of a court case in Jerusalem over the seizure of St. John's Hospice by settlers. The Israeli supreme court ruled earlier this week that the settlers could stay pending a final ruling on the case, which involves leasing of the property. The Israeli government revealed Sunday that it had helped the settlers with almost half of the lease amount involved.

In addition to Bishop Khoury, leading Monday's Amman march were the Rev. Constantine Karmash of the Greek Orthodox Church, Bishop Saba Yuwakim of the Greek Catholic Church, the Rev. Salim Al Sayegh of the Roman Catholic Church and Raouf Abu Jaber, chairman of the Arab Orthodox Renaissance Society.

MAP reviews objectives, future plans

AMMAN (Petra) — President of the Jordanian chapter of the Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) Abdul Majid Shouman Monday said that His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has accepted to serve as the honorary president of the society, which is now passing through the legal stages of registration and licensing.

At a press conference, Shouman reviewed the objectives of the society, saying that it aims at alleviating the sufferings of "our kinsmen" in the occupied Arab territories, providing medical services to the injured Palestinians and medical equipment to hospitals lacking such equipment in the West Bank.

He pointed out that the society, which is an extension of the London-based MAP that was established in 1974 by Arab and British personalities sent medical volunteers and physiotherapists to the occupied territories to provide health services and training for Palestinian youths.

Shouman said the society had set up 60 centres throughout the West Bank and is paying salaries

to the doctors and medical personnel working in these centres. The society is currently in the process of building three centres for physiotherapy in Tulkarem and Hebron and a special education centre in Hebron.

"Last year it sent 27 volunteers to the occupied Arab territories and 8 others to Lebanon to provide health services," he said.

"Not only does the society provide medical services, it also contributes to exposing the inhuman Israeli practices against the Palestinian people," Shouman said.

"In addition to its medical services in the occupied territories MAP provides health services to Palestinian refugees in Baqa'a camp, who are not covered by the medical services of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA)," Shouman said.

Shouman said that MAP volunteers were subjected to persecutions by the Israeli authorities who were always keen on banning their entry, and consequently obstructing their humanitarian mission. "However, all such

Israeli attempts failed in view of the non-political status of the society and the world-wide support it enjoys in this capacity," he added.

On the financing of the society, Shouman said it relies mainly on contributions made by individuals and organisations, and noted that it does not receive any form of official support. Shouman pointed out that the society is now in the process of setting up two branches in the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.

Shouman said MAP will organise a sponsored walk on May 11, under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. The 22-kilometre sponsored walk will start from Jordan International Hotel and end at Khirbet Abu Jaber in Yadouda, where a direct sale outlet will be set up.

MAP will also hold a dinner on May 13, at the Jordan Intercontinental to raise funds for the society projects. Proceeds from these two activities in addition to a raffle, will go to the projects being carried out by the society in the occupied territories.

Shbeilat criticises political activists serving in panel on national charter

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Islamist Deputy Laith Shbeilat Monday criticised political personalities who have become members of the Royal Commission to draft the national charter for what he described as deserting plans to hold a national conference which was touted before the holding of November's national elections.

"In our humble opinion, we believe that all the political forces' participating in the drafting of the national charter has made a mistake and will only accomplish momentary gains at the expense of the people's trust," Shbeilat said in a statement made available to the Jordan Times Monday.

Shbeilat was referring to a proposed national conference, which was preceded by the announcement of plans for a national charter outlining the minimum political and economic demands made during the April riots in the south.

Several meetings among political personalities in Jordan, including leftist and Muslim Brotherhood personalities, took place immediately after the riots and the charter translated these

demands which were later signed by over 400 personalities.

The main aim of the proposed national conference was to "apply pressure on the executive authority to stop mishandling the Constitution and allow the people the right to govern themselves through the Lower House of Parliament," Shbeilat said.

Shbeilat warned the members of the Royal Commission that they would lose the trust of their constituents "because they were not able to unite their forces and their work in one front away from the umbrella of the executive authority."

He said the "reneging" of the political personalities on their promises made during the election campaign in rejecting the national charter "needs an honest look at one's soul so that (these personalities) would not find themselves in a place where their constituents do not want them, forsaking their leadership of their constituencies' aspirations."

Shbeilat also argued the constitutionality of a proposed referendum on the national charter and said that the Constitution's article which stipulates that the people are the source of all authority "does not give legality to this direct plebiscite."

"The Constitution specifies how the country exercises its authority through the three authority forms," Shbeilat said.

He added that those who believe that there is no constitutional basis for public plebiscite "is wrong." According to Shbeilat, the executive authority, faced with the refusal of the legislative authority to one of its programmes "could return to the dissolving of parliament and holding national elections based on the ideas which were rejected by the legislative authority."

"If the people elect deputies who apply themselves to the wishes of the executive authority well and good... if not then a new government has to accept the decree of the people."

"This is why the Constitution stipulates that it is illegal to dissolve parliament twice for the same reason," he said.

Shbeilat maintained that if things continue like this without due reconsideration of the people's will then "the reply to the proposed referendum is with a counter-plebiscite in which people are asked fundamental questions that relate to system of government, sources of legislation, ideology of state and also the question of peace."

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraqi president thanks King

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday received a cable from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, in reply to a congratulatory cable the King sent on the second anniversary earlier this month of the liberation of Fao Peninsula. President Saddam expressed appreciation to King Hussein and wished him continued good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.

Kabariti signs agreement with museum

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministry of Tourism Monday concluded an agreement with Liverpool museum, under which a mobile Jordanian exhibition of antiquities and traditional dresses will be held at Liverpool museum March 27, 1990. The agreement was signed by minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti and Liverpool museum director, who is currently on a visit to Jordan. The mobile exhibition is now being held in Tokyo and will be moved by the end of this month to Singapore, where it will officially opened in September. Kabariti outlined the importance of holding such mobile exhibitions, which he said, reflect the Jordanian folklore and the life in Jordan.

Salt rally denounces Israeli practices

SALT (Petra) — Speakers at a public rally held in Salt Monday denounced Israeli practices in the occupied Arab territories, Israeli continued violations of religious freedoms and the tampering with the Islamic and Christian holy shrines. They also condemned the Israeli assault on patriarch Diodoros and stressed the need for national unity and cohesion in the face of the occupation. Speakers at the rally, organised by Mar Jirya charity society were Dr. Fawzi Tu'aima, Dr. Abdul Razzaq Ensour, Ahmad Hiyasat and Farid Fakhouri.

Jerash to start literacy programme

JERASH (Petra) — Jerash district governor Ratche Al Majali Monday chaired a meeting at the district office, during which he discussed with officials a proposed literacy programme to be implemented in the region, in accordance with a selective plan.

Madaba warns of Malta disease

AMMAN (Petra) — Social services centres in Madaba district Monday concluded a two-day health awareness campaigns, carried out jointly in cooperation with the health education department to make people aware of Malta disease. The campaign included lectures about modes of transmission of the disease, its symptoms and the precautionary measures for combating this disease and preventing its transmission to people.

Citizens urged to watch for moon

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Mohammad Muheilan Monday called on all citizens to watch for the moon of Shawwal Tuesday night. Muheilan instructed all Sharia courts to remain open Tuesday night to receive calls from citizens sighting the moon.

Touristic sites to open for visitors

By Ziad Al Shilleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Touristic sites all over the Kingdom will be open for visitors as of the first day of Eid Al Fitr, thus marking the start of the summer touristic season, according to director of the Tourist Investment Department Isma'il Al Hassan.

He said the department has finalised all preparations for the summer season and said that arrangements have been made to open the national parks in Dibbin and Zai as well as Ishtafina rest-house for the public on the first day of Eid Al Fitr.

Hassan said cleanliness and maintenance works were finished and the three touristic sites were provided with the facilities and qualified cadres to manage them and present the best services to the public with reasonable prices in order to encourage internal

tourism.

He also affirmed his department's interest in promoting and encouraging internal tourism by taking care of touristic and archaeological sites throughout the Kingdom.

"Besides encouraging internal tourism, the Tourist Investment Department promotes for Jordanian tourism abroad," said Hassan. He added that Jordan is considered a touristic attraction for its unique location and its touristic and archaeological sites.

Hassan expressed his satisfaction with the scheduled visits of Iraqi tourists and affirmed his department's readiness to receive Iraqis at any touristic or archaeological site in Jordan.

Hassan urged citizens to keep the touristic sites and the woods clean when visiting them, "since they are considered a national wealth that should be conserved."

RSCN calls for legislation on protection of nature

AMMAN (Petra) — Vice-chairman of the board of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) Laila Sharaf Sunday called on the government and the Parliament to enact the necessary legislations to protect the environment, and said that without such legislations it won't be possible to protect it or prevent its exploitation.

In an interview with Jordan Television, Sharaf reviewed the committee's programmes, which will be carried out during the Jordanian Environment Year, that has been declared by Her Majesty Queen Noor at the directives of His Majesty King Hussein.

Sharaf called on all national organisations and institutions to expand in the construction of wild life reservations in a bid to achieve natural balance.

She also called for the construction of more earth dams in the desert to collect water, and said that the Armed Forces have already embarked on the construction of such dams. She underlined the important role the mass media and the schools can play in spreading awareness of the need to protect the environment.

CONDOLENCES

The editor and staff of the Jordan Times express their heart-felt condolences to their colleague Elia Nasrallah and his family over the death of his father-in-law Najib Farah Abad Rabbo, who passed away Sunday April 22.

May the departed soul rest in peace.

Newborn, latest friend of Jordan Times

AMMAN (J.T.) — On April 5 Samar was born, adding a new dimension to the life of our former colleague Jalal Azzah and his wife. Being child No. 8, Samar scored a full-house of growing pains. Her birth did not only bring joy and happiness to the Azzahs but also received much applause from the Jordan Times staff. Cute little Samar weighed 4.4 kilograms and measured 54 centimetres in height.



Samar Azzah

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITION

★ Exhibition of Earth Day stamp collection at the Postal Savings Corporation.

FILM

★ Documentary programme entitled "Conserving America: the Rivers" at the American Centre — 3:00 p.m.

TOMORROW
25TH OF APRIL 1990
12:00 P.M.

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The ice is too thin

THE U.S. House of Representatives appears to be poised to follow the example of the Senate and adopt a resolution recognising "united" Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Coming at a most sensitive phase in the Middle East, with prospects showing its colours, fade though they are, in the horizon of some movement towards settling the Palestinian problem, there has to be something really wrong with the thinking of American lawmakers prompting them to press ahead and endorse the resolution.

In the event that the House of Representatives, despite the timely warning of Senate minority leader Robert Dole who has acknowledged that the Senate's adoption of the resolution was a mistake, goes ahead and adopts the document, then all accusations levelled at the American Congress by Arabs, particularly those labelled as radical by Washington, would be proved true. For, how can one justify this total disregard for the feelings and sentiments of the one-billion strong international Muslim community which regards Jerusalem as its third holiest shrine, and the Christian faith for whom the Holy City is the holiest of all?

What is the peace that the Americans are furthering when they slam every Arab and Muslim by declaring Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, which occupied the Holy City by force? Isn't simple logic that instead of advancing the so-called peace process, such an American declaration will only strengthen the radicals among Muslims, Christians and Jews alike?

If indeed the American lawmakers are serious in their declared intentions to see that peace and justice prevail in the Middle East while also ensuring that the interests of their country are served, then they have one only option: Heed the advice of Sen. Dole and his like, and leave the question of Jerusalem to negotiations. They should understand that if the Palestinians have accepted Israel as a state, no Palestinian, Christian, Muslim or Arab, will compromise the status of Jerusalem as a city holy to all three monotheistic religions of the world. And for them no price is too high to resist any action which delivers Jerusalem in a platter to Israel.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i Arabic daily dwelt on the question of Israel's annexation of Arab Jerusalem and the U.S. Senate's endorsement of such illegal action. It said that Senator Robert Dole did not only condemn this action but also demanded that the Senate rescind the endorsement because it was an irresponsible move. Senator Dole admitted that his talks with King Hussein put him face to face with new realities of which he was not aware until then, about the status of Jerusalem and the situation in the occupied Arab lands. The paper noted. It said that the King's briefings to Dole have helped to enlighten the Senate, and brought about Dole's condemnation of the Senate's endorsement. King Hussein was careful to make things clear for the U.S. senator and the U.S. administration which, the paper noted, should shoulder serious responsibility towards the developments in the Palestinian issue. The paper said that the King was careful to point out the dangers inherent in the Senate's action in support of the Jewish state's illegal annexation of the Arab city, which the paper added, can only obstruct the course of establishing peace based on justice. Dole's condemnation, the paper added, should prompt the Arab states to launch a concerted action at all levels expound the Arab position and advocate Arab rights in Palestine.

Al Dustour daily discussed the situation in the occupied Arab region where the Israeli leaders are still squabbling over the formation for a new government while they are openly making plans for the absorption of new Jewish immigrants. The paper said that everyday brings to the Arabs further information about the Israeli government's open involvement in the settlement of Jewish immigrants in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip despite denials by government leaders. The Israeli housing ministry, the paper said, has recently allocated sufficient funds with the approval of Yitzhak Shamir the caretaker prime minister to build new settlements on Arab lands and to occupy Christian and Islamic premises in the process of absorbing Jews from Eastern Europe. Shamir is trying to win favour for the Israeli electorate to form a new government once new elections took place in Israel and is trying to enhance the image of the Likud and foil attempts by Shimon Peres to form a government, the paper noted. Shamir's actions and his plans for new settlements, the paper noted represent a new formidable challenge to the Arab Nation and also a defiance of the U.S. administration which has been condoning all Israeli actions in Arab lands.

Sawt Al Shaab daily dwelt again on the question of an Arab summit meeting which the paper said is a must in view of continued Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries. The paper said that nearly 1,000 Jews arrive in Israel daily to settle on Arab lands and eventually provide the Israeli armed forces with further manpower needed for Israel's expansion at the expenses of the Arab World. Whether the Arab summit was convened or not the Israelis will not put an end to their plans and they will continue to absorb more Jews and settle them on Arab territory, the paper continued. It said that the Israelis are preparing for war and have already distributed anti-gas masks and taken other precautionary measures against any kind of warfare, while the Arabs remain passive and seem to be indifferent to these developments. The paper said that in the face of these challenges the Arabs ought at least to convene a summit meeting to discuss plans for self-defence.

Strong economy, social welfare make democracy non-issue in Saudi Arabia

By Nick Ludington
The Associated Press

RIYADH — An old man wagged his finger at Prince Sultan, second in line to the throne, and complained that his soldier son was assigned to a base far from his home in Riyadh.

"But your son has obligations as a soldier," said the prince, who also is the Saudi defence minister. "He has obligations to his family," the man retorted. Sultan consulted his advisors and announced that the young man would be reassigned in Riyadh, the kingdom's capital.

The exchange took place during a "majlis," or consultation. Sultan regularly holds with the people. A foreign reporter was permitted to attend.

Most days, Sultan and the scores of other princes in Saudi Arabia's extended royal family open the doors of their palaces to the people. They listen to complaints on all manner of issues and settle disputes.

It's the nearest thing the Saudis have to democracy and there is little demand for more from the estimated 8 million citizens of this kingdom, which sits on one-quarter of the world's oil reserves. About 3 million foreign workers also live in Saudi Arabia.

Representative democracy is overwhelming Communism in Eastern Europe and making inroads in the Third World, including neighbouring Arab countries.

In Saudi Arabia, tribal tradition and huge oil profits let the royal family provide opportunity, public services and security that make democracy a non-issue.

The monarchy rules through wide consensus with all segments of society, ensuring the Saud dynasty's survival. Laws are based on the holy Koran.

Prince Majed, brother of King Fahd and governor of the Red Sea province that includes the holy city of Mecca, told reporters recently that Communism and other temporal ideologies "are false and contrary to human nature."

The majlis system gives an estimated 250,000 Saudis access to princes and senior officials every year on behalf of their families.

In a social system fed by billions of dollars from oil revenue, citizens pay no taxes.

Education is free through the university level, and each college student gets \$800 a month in pocket money. Health services, extensive and of high quality, are free.

A jet air ambulance makes at least 200 flights a month to ferry patients from remote areas to Riyadh for surgery at the lavish King Fahd specialty hospital.

To build a home, each Saudi family gets a free plot of 625 square metres and a 30-year loan of \$80,000, free of interest.

People who build clinics, factories, workshops or hotels get interest-free loans equivalent to 70 per cent of the construction costs.

Generous pensions are paid on retirement.

"So who needs democracy?" a Western diplomat asked.

In tense times, the Saudis customarily say they may establish a majlis al-shura, or consultative assembly, a quasi-parliament with most or all of the members chosen by the king.

Such a council, approved by Islamic tradition, was mentioned in 1975, when a deranged nephew murdered King Feisal and his successors were taking control.

The nephew was publicly beheaded, a punishment decreed in the Koran and imposed routinely for murder, sex crimes or drug smuggling. Public executions take place in Riyadh's main square on many Fridays.

More beheadings and new mention of a majlis were decreed in 1979 after a group of fundamentalist fanatics seized the great mosque of Mecca. That event sent shock waves through the royal family, which pins much of its legitimacy to its piety.

The fundamentalists demanded an end to what they considered excessive Western influence in Saudi Arabia's rapid modernisation.

tion during the oil boom years. In 1987, after Iranian-backed sabotage in the oil provinces and during the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, King Fahd was said to be studying the majlis plan again.

Still there is no council, appointed or elected. A handsome structure to house it stands empty in the grounds of King Fahd's Al Yamamah palace in Riyadh.

"I believe it will come, but it's a matter of priorities," said a senior Saudi official. Like other sources, he did not want his name used.

"There's no groundswell of opinion for the majlis," an influential newspaper editor said. "The people are satisfied with the tranquility, stability, security, prosperity, the freedom to travel."

Unrestricted travel to the West is a safety valve for middle class Saudis.

They mingle with Westerners and indulge, often ostentatiously, in night life and the West's free-wheeling culture. At home, they live under strict Islamic rules that prohibit alcohol, unveiled women in public, women drivers or shopping or recreation during the five daily times of prayer.

Tourism to Saudi Arabia is all but non-existent. Apart from Muslim pilgrims, most visitors are businessmen or expatriate workers.

Most Westerners live in walled company compounds where the women can play tennis or swim in bikinis. Residents receive unpublishable shipments of liquor.

The royal family has more than 3,000 princes. 500 in the direct line of succession. This has ensured stability through family unity and tight control of extensive security forces.

Free enterprise and generous social programme have been crucial in transforming a semi-nomadic society, with little upheaval, into a modern one with a strong sense of Islamic identity.

Saudi officials say King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, who founded modern Saudi Arabia in 1927, established the consensus rule on which the country's government is based.

Abdul Aziz is quoted as telling his sons the "thread" of consensus ties to the people is stronger than the "iron bands" of autocracy.

A Saudi journalist with access to one of the top princes said that, instead of creating a consultative council, the rulers decided a few years ago to expand the "open majlis" system with King Fahd, princes and top officials opening their palaces for regular meetings with citizens.

The atmosphere of the open majlis is informal. The king is not addressed as "your majesty" but as "Fahd," "Father of Fahd," or "tawee' al umur," Arabic for "long life."

Religious leaders are brought in on important decisions to avoid dissension, and other important constituencies are consulted regularly.

An expert in Saudi affairs said the 1990-95 economic plan was circulated for two years in advance among businessmen, economists and others, and many alterations were made as a result.

"This gave a large number of key people the feeling and reality of participation," he said.

Saudis are concerned about tense relations with Iran, a major regional power, and about a new Arab-Israel conflict and the vulnerability of their oil facilities to bombing or missile attacks.

They have forged close security ties with the United States and are a huge market for Western arms sales.

The only significant internal opposition to royal rule is the Shi'ite Muslim minority in the oil-producing eastern provinces along the Gulf.

More than 90 per cent of Saudis belong to the mainstream Sunni branch of Islam, but some usulis or fundamentalists, among the several hundred thousand Shi'ites are influenced by predominantly Shi'ite Iran. They are blamed for the sabotage of oil installations.

The View from Fourth Circle

By Rami G. Khouri

Pass the pan-Arab springrolls

LAST week's anniversary of the riots and demonstrations that shook Jordan and ushered in the fresh era of political and economic change has been an opportunity for widespread comment on, a) why Jordan erupted last year, and b) what has happened since then. I believe it is insufficient to go back only to April 1989 to understand the causes of what is happening today, and it is also self-indulgently wrong to look only at Jordan.

Rather, our experience in Jordan — both good and bad — should be seen as an almost perfect microcosm of trends that have dominated most of the Arab World during the past 20 years. These trends comprise a fascinating and, at times, embarrassing combination of political and economic developments. If we review the performance of the Arab World during the decade from 1978 to 1988, we find a gruesome combination of rising foreign debt, static or declining standards of living, rising educational standards, and constricting parameters of personal and political liberties. The main trends were as follows:

Governments bolstered by the vision of substantial and endless oil revenues spent freely, saw their people become addicted to consumer imports, and then started borrowing heavily in order to continue financing a spending spree that suddenly saw the collective Arab Gross National Product measured in hundreds of billions of dollars. The fact is, during the 1980s, the collective foreign debt of the Arab World increased from approximately \$42 billion to nearly \$150 billion, according to published figures which are certainly not always very accurate. The real total Arab foreign debt is probably closer to \$200 billion.

In the case of Jordan, in 1988 we were widely quoting a foreign debt figure of around \$3-4 billion. When the full facts came out, our foreign debt was double this amount, at just over \$8 billion. How did this happen? How could a government entrusted with the wellbeing and future aspirations of millions of people hide \$4 billion in foreign debt from the people they were supposed to be serving?

At the same time as foreign debt was rising sharply, standards of living started to drop after 1983, when the make-believe world of endless oil-fuelled growth came to an end. Throughout the 1980s, the average per capita Gross National Product of the Arab World declined by an annual average of around 2.5 per cent per year. This means that the average value of goods and services produced by every

Arab person declined steadily during the past decade, due to the combination of rising population and stagnant or declining economic output. Some countries did register economic growth, but the majority declined, and therefore the net average for the entire Arab World was a net decline in per capita GNP — and please recall, this is the same Arab World which was heralded in the late 1970s as entering into one of history's most fabulous periods of wealth creation and economic growth.

This economic regression took place in both the oil-producing states and the non-oil producers. In the oil states, the magnitude of the decline could be camouflaged because of those states' ability to draw down their financial reserves in order to continue financing their annual budgets. Many oil producers started borrowing internally in the 1980s, and others resorted to international borrowing (some of it further camouflaged by borrowing through semi-state institutions, such as government-owned industries or financial funds, instead of straightforward sovereign borrowing by the government itself).

Furthermore, Arab governments spent hundreds of billions of dollars on military equipment which was either unnecessary or, when used in anger, more often than not was used against other Arabs, whether in domestic or regional circumstances. By the end of the 1980s, most Arab economies were characterised by economic adjustment programmes, foreign exchange shortages, government spending cuts, continued borrowing, drawing down reserves, rising unemployment and other factors that accompany economic adjustment programmes.

The third key trend in the 1980s was the steady constriction of personal liberties and public political freedoms, as governments and ruling power elites steadily shut down or co-opted institutions or individuals who sought to offer a differing viewpoint than that espoused by the ruling power structure. This is how governments could hide the true magnitude of their national economic problems from their people.

Parliaments were closed or transformed into sorrowful rubber stamps; the press was transformed into a giant and totally non-credible public relations machine for government; universities and schools were turned into meaningless mass bureaucracies that turned out hundreds of thousands of people who

were not taught how to think for themselves, because their societies would not encourage such independent thinking after their graduation; and personality cults and hero worship became the pre-eminent political doctrine of the decade.

In Jordan's case, the mistakes of the past were implicitly recognised and admitted in post-April 1989 government moves reversing a range of previous measures, such as passport confiscations; banning journalists and writers; replacing the writer's association and the press management with pathetic, pre-programmed puppets and then trying to buy off the press with promises of higher salaries and other material benefits; firing employees for their alleged political views; and other excessive, often megalomaniac practices that were typical of the abuse of power that took place in many other Third World countries.

The fourth constant in the 1980s was the cumulative increase in Arab frustration and humiliation, generated by domestic and regional factors over decades. These factors included, a) the ability of Israel and its American backers to force the Arab World into a stalemate of shame, with all of Palestine under Israeli control; b) the anguish of hearing much pan-Arab rhetoric amidst the reality of multiple and sustained inter-Arab conflicts and intrigues; c) the spectacle of political musical chairs, of Arab countries intermittently trying to unite with one another and then soon after degenerating into harsh confrontations, and sometimes even military clashes; and, d) suffering the indignity of being denied meaningful opportunities by which ordinary people or members of national intelligentsias could participate in processes of discussion or electoral contests that would help formulate public policy. By the end of the 1980s, the average Arab was fed up, frustrated, humiliated and angry — but could not see a way out of the dilemma.

Arab governments themselves recognised the failure of both pan-Arab rhetoric and attempts to foment a narrow, state-based nationalism. The 1980s, therefore, saw the triumph of pragmatism in the form of sub-regional blocs (the GCC, ACC and Maghreb Arab Union), which aimed at more practical measures of cooperation and integration.

While all these negative trends were taking their course, positive factors were generating a massive grassroots layer of tens of millions of people with a new attitude

that did not easily tolerate the negative trends. These Arabs, through literacy, basic education, rising expectations, private enterprise, and contact with the rest of the world through travel and the communications media, were not willing to see their children suffer the same problems and constraints that had afflicted their own adult lives. The combination of mass education, stability and rising standards of living which characterised the period from the 1950s to the end of the 1970s created a new Arab identity which would not long suffer the political and economic indignities of the 1980s. A clash was inevitable. How or when it would come was hard to predict. But it has come, and it has taken different forms in different countries.

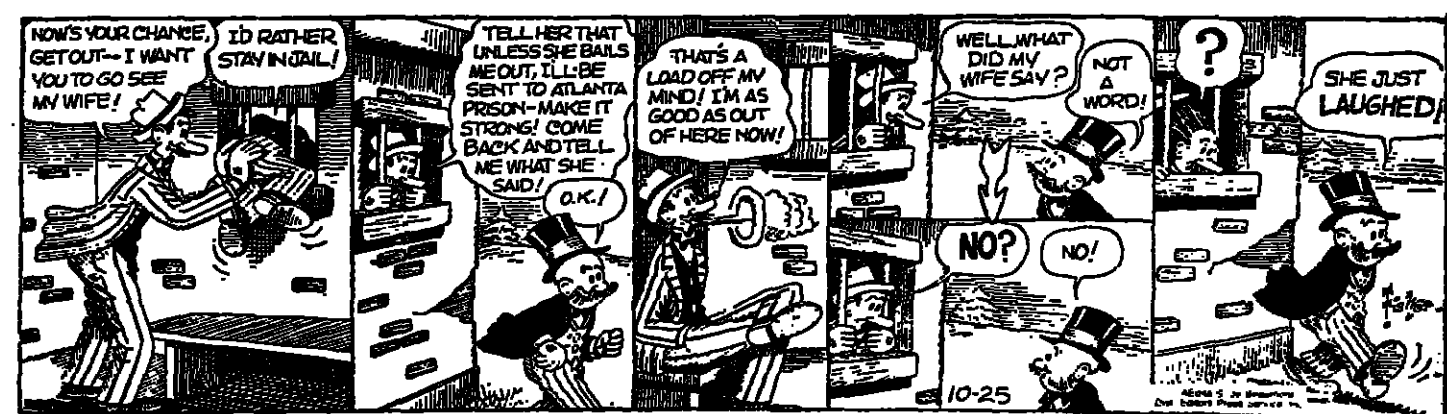
Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Yemen and Kuwait are the countries where the initial signs of this change are most visible, in the form of free elections, credible parliaments, political pluralism, an increasingly free press, the rise of a normal domestic political infrastructure, and a sharp curtailment of the ability of governments to restrict the personal, political and human rights of their people. Other Arab countries will follow soon. Watch.

In most cases (Kuwait being the exception), economic hardship was the short-term spark that ignited the fuse of national transformation. But economic hardships, such as price rises and shortages due to economic adjustment programmes, have to be traced back to their full and true causes (i.e. all points above). Economic mismanagement and political shortsightedness finally reached their full and inevitable historical conclusion in the late 1980s. The economic crises which swept the Arab World after 1985 were not just economic crises, but rather a manifestation of political shortcomings and failures which could only be treated with a radical transformation of the domestic and regional political culture.

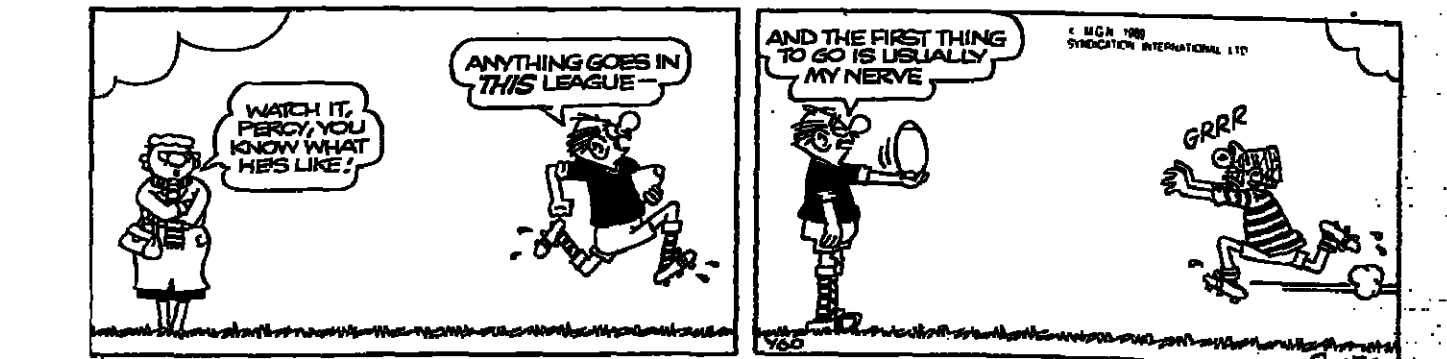
The model with which the Arab World should be equated is not Eastern Europe, but Eastern Asia. We are following in the footsteps of countries such as Taiwan and South Korea, where people who enjoyed economic prosperity but no parallel political development finally demanded pluralistic and open political systems.

It's a long way from Jordan and Algeria to Taiwan and South Korea. Or is it? Pass the springrolls.

Mutt'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



JORDAN TIMES

Tel: 667171

'Prisoners of Chernobyl' speak out after 4 years

By Andrew Katell
The Associated Press

NOVIYE GROMYKI, USSR — Smiling children skip along, dirt paths kicking up radioactive dust. They throw stones in their radioactive playground, then go home for contaminated meat and milk.

Since cesium, strontium and plutonium descended on their rooftops, gardens, farms and schools four years ago, the people of this Byelorussian village and of scores more in the Ukraine and Russia have been prisoners of Chernobyl.

They are surrounded and continuously bombarded by an enemy they cannot see, smell or hear. They say their government and the world have all but forgotten them.

In Bartolomeyevka, another village, a warm and hearty woman named Tatiana T. Kharshunova said: "They did this to us, and we had to live here. Not just for a month or two but four years. No one paid attention to us."

She and her neighbours grow potatoes and barley in their gardens, even though the radiation level is 40 curies, nearly three times the danger level. They can recite the figures like scientists, but do not seem fully aware of the threat.

"I'm as strong as a horse," Irina Y. Kovoleva said. She looked down at her 14-month-old grandson in her arms and added: "He's strong, too."

The boy and his parents were scheduled to be evacuated the next day.

"I'll cry when they leave," the grandmother said. "The cemetery is nearby, so I'll die and go there."

Nadezhda N. Dmitrochenko of the local governing council said she tries to explain the dangers of radiation, but "people still don't know what this is. ... It doesn't glow and it doesn't whistle."

On April 26, 1986, an explosion and fire destroyed one of four reactors at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukraine, 200 kilometres south-west of Noviy Gromyki.

As the children of the village played on a sunny April day four years later, chickens and cats darted among the green and brown wooden huts.

The only sounds were chickens clucking, dogs barking and the distant roar of tractors plowing contaminated fields in the vast, fertile plain traversed by a creek.

The official death toll from Chernobyl remains at 31, but a Soviet newspaper said last fall it had risen to 250. Scientists still predict thousands of deaths will

HERE is a brief review of the Chernobyl nuclear accident and its aftermath:

THE ACCIDENT — On April 26, 1986, a fire started in one of the four 1,000-megawatt reactors of the nuclear power station at Chernobyl, 130 kilometres north of Kiev, capital of the Ukraine. A core meltdown and explosion followed, sending huge quantities of radiation into the atmosphere. The Soviet did not report the accident until two days later, after Scandinavian complaints of unusually high radiation levels.

EVACUATION — About 116,000 people were evacuated from contaminated parts of the Ukraine and Byelorussia, most from a 14.5 kilometre radius of the plant. A pass is required to enter the area. Last year, the government decided to evacuate 85 more villages in byelorussia, 31 in Russia and 14 in the Ukraine.

DEATHS — Two people were killed in the accident and 29 are officially reported to have died of radiation sickness later. Yuri Scherbak, a Ukrainian member of the national parliament, and other say up to 250 have died. An official report commissioned in 1986 estimated 5,300 people would die over 70 years from cancer resulting from radiation exposure.

COST — Current estimates of cleanup costs are 30 times the original eight billion rubles (\$13 billion) at the official exchange rate. Surveys by the three republics affected indicate the cost may reach 250 billion rubles (\$405 billion) over the next decade.

PLANS FOR CHERNOBYL — The Ukrainian legislature decided this year that the plant, whose other three reactors are still functioning, should be closed by 1995. Specialists say shutting it down may take up to 10 years.

be traceable to the accident.

After years of passivity, the people-affected are speaking out.

Residents of Gomel, the provincial capital, plan a strike and demonstration Thursday, the anniversary of what the government newspaper Izvestia called "the greatest technological catastrophe" in world history.

Citizens of Kiev, the Ukrainian capital 130 kilometres south of Chernobyl, also plan demonstrations. A telethon to raise money for victims is scheduled in Moscow.

Protesters demand that officials who concealed the extent of the danger and delayed evacuating contaminated areas be brought to trial. They want medical care for victims and supplies of radiation-free food.

About 70 per cent of the Chernobyl radiation fell on Byelorussia and contaminated one-fifth of the arable land, an area where 2.2 million people live.

Immediately after the accident, about 25,000 Byelorussians were evacuated, but only last year did officials admit the full scope of the contamination and decide to resettle 100,000 more. The resettle-

ment will take five years. People eat and breathe nuclear poison in the meantime.

The programme appears poorly run. Some evacuees are being resettled on land that also is contaminated and the government is building new homes, schools and offices in areas that are being evacuated.

Most families with young children have been moved out of Noviy Gromyki since resettlement began Jan. 1.

Those still waiting feel abandoned and frightened. They cannot move on their own because housing must be found for them. "We sit and cry," said Claudia A. Kostochka, 75, who was on a bench with two other women, sobbing. "They won't take us. We're pensioners."

"I lived almost a whole century here, raised a son and daughter here. Two weeks ago they closed our store, so we're eating cabbage and cucumber preserves from last year. We don't know whether it's dangerous or not, but we have to eat."

Radiation everywhere
A farmer said the milk from his cows was too radioactive to

drink, so he sells it to the government, which makes it into butter. He said the butter was supposed to be safe.

Many others interviewed said they drank the milk because there was no alternative. Many more said they did not bother to have their home produce checked at a local radiation laboratory.

Soil and dust carry radioactive particles.

The only paved surfaces in Noviy Gromyki are one street and the grade school playground at No. 13 Lenin Street. Winds blow dust from the dirt roads and fields onto the asphalt and the people, and into their homes.

Residents are warned not to gather firewood from the highly radioactive forests nearby. Burning it makes their stoves into what specialists have called "mini-reactors."

Villagers are supposed to wash frequently, but they are allowed only one bar of soap a month, the same as anyone else. Soap is rationed in most of the country. Each household gets 30 rubles a month from the government to buy uncontaminated food, but it is hard to find. Thirty rubles are worth \$49 at the official exchange rate, but much less in reality.

In Vетка, a few kilometres south of Noviy Gromyki, children are fed "clean" meals at high school No. 1 and the crumbling cement floors are washed several times a day.

Outside, their protection against radiation consists of paved playground and a concrete barrier to keep them off the sidewalk where contaminated dirt falls from the roof. Students are supposed to rinse their shoes in a pan of water at the school entrance, but many don't.

Several students said they ignored warnings and rode bikes in the forest. They complained of headaches and exhaustion, which they blamed on fallout.

To the list of ailments the Chernobyl generation suffers, school principal Nikolai N. Shatilov added bloody noses, swollen thyroid glands and vision loss. The radiation level at high school No. 1 is two to three times normal.

"We can't provide normal conditions in school," he said. "There's only one thing to do: Take them to a clean zone. We must save the children. They are our future."

One student said she was bitter because no one seemed to care, not even the doctors who examine her class twice a year.

A 16-year-old boy said: "We're sick and tired of all the checkups. What are they for? All they do is keep saying everything's normal."

Slum women win new lease in life

By William Onyango

NAIROBI, Kenya — A few years ago, they were poor landless women whose only source of income was prostitution and selling the traditional illicit drink "chang'aa" — referred to here as "kill me quick" because of its lethal effects.

Today, the Humama women's group is a shining example of the determination of poor women from the Mathare slums of Nairobi to change their lives.

Their determination is yielding results on recently acquired plots of land where they are building houses. And they have won a four million shillings (U.S.\$186,000) contract to make roofing tiles.

The Humama women's group began as a loose collection of women's self-help societies, under the auspices of the Undugu Society.

The Undugu (brotherhood) Society is best known for its work with disadvantaged street people from the grim Nairobi slums, concentrating on getting young boys off the streets and away from the temptations of crime and drugs. It was in that same spirit that the Undugu project became interested in the scattered women's groups.

Formed in 1988, Humama was registered as a self-help group with 240 members. According to its secretary, Perpetua Omari, "membership is open to all women who are poor or landless."

Initially, the women earned a living from small-scale hawking and vegetable selling. But their activities attracted the attention of an organisation known as Shelter Afrique which proposed that the women make roofing tiles.

"Our representative picked on roofing tiles because he was aware

of a ready market from Intermediate Technology Workshop (ITW)," said a Shelter Afrique spokesman. "ITW was looking for sub-contractors after winning a tender to supply roofing tiles for Nairobi's Komorock Housing Scheme."

Although Humama lacked expertise, Shelter Afrique organised training and within a few weeks the women were ready to begin business after receiving a loan from the Africa Housing Fund (AHF) — a programme sponsored by Shelter Afrique — which has to be repaid by the end of 1993.

Since March 1989, the women have been working round the clock in two shifts, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m.

They are determined to provide sufficient roofing tiles for the Komorock Housing Scheme. This scheme, in the words of Kenya's Lands and Housing Minister,

Darius Mbela, "will be the largest single housing project in black Africa and will provide shelter for 10,000 house owners."

The women have moved out of the Mathare slums and thus away from the lifestyle which involved the selling of their dignity.

"The activity of making tiles has greatly improved the living standards of these poor women. Creating employment opportunities for them relieves them from unproductive activities," says Alfonso Mbakaya, a freelance photographer in Nairobi.

According to Perpetua Omari: "The money they receive from the contract is sent to the group's account while some is paid to individuals as part of their monthly wages."

Some women with formal training work as bookkeepers, secretaries, business administrators and machine operators — PANOS.

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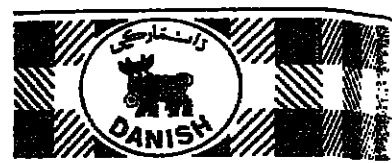
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Reformists form new bloc

(Continued from page 1)

labour law in 1976 forcibly caused the merger of several unions and since then the federation has had 17 members.

Long-time union members claim that the merger was instigated by the minister of labour at the time in order to quell the growing power of union members. Unions and professional associations have served as an unofficial and sometimes underground platform for banned political parties and activists since 1957.

While three unions have historically been dominated by politically active unionists (mostly leftists), observers say that the federation has been run by unionists close to the "security apparatus" and the Muslim Brotherhood movement for the last three decades.

Some union members attending Monday's press conference said they saw the announced leadership of the new bloc was only slightly more democratic than the federation's executive committee and that the reforms had to go much further than the memo indicated. But others disagreed.

Jordan urges changes

(Continued from page 1)

the ACC and then to embrace all Arab states who are willing to join. Last February, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and North Yemen signed an agreement for cooperation in the fields of oil and gas during a summit meeting of the four heads of state.

Egyptian Oil Minister Abdul Hadi Qandol also delivered a speech in which he stressed the importance of pushing into force agreements signed last December states to enhance Arab economic integration.

Taking note of threats to Iraq and the dangers inherent in Soviet Jewish immigration to the occupied Arab territories, Qandol said that Arab states should work towards increased self-reliance.

"Arab oil-producing states have a

powerful weapon that needs to be developed to increase self-reliance," he told the meeting.

Citing an example, he said Egypt has been successful in achieving 80 per cent independence in the field of oil production. He offered Egyptian expertise for the use of ACC member states.

North Yemeni Oil Minister Ahmad Mihail called for accelerating the process of oil industrialisation to reduce dependence on developed countries. He said Arab resources were being drained through dependence on foreign oil exploration companies.

Earlier Monday, the four ministers were received by His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Mudar Badran. The King urged the ministers to intensify their efforts towards coordinating work among their respective ministries and institutions.

of the executive committee can take place. That did not happen. Therefore the elections are null and void before they even began," Rashid said.

The composition of the new bloc is a mixture of unionists close to the Communist Party, some very "establishment" unionists and one Islamist.

Asked if the political character of the bloc was desirable, one unionist, who like most of the politically active unionists in Jordan has had more left and pan-Arab leanings, said he welcomed

the mixture.

"Our aim is reform here above everything else and having people of politically different shades actually adds to the movement's credibility," he said. "Leftists, traditionalists and Islamists have joined forces to ask for labour law reforms and more rights for workers; it's a first," he said.

The bloc's leadership has contacted parliamentarians belonging to the Lower House's Democratic Bloc and are expected to meet with the minister of labour Tuesday to discuss the situation.

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Bonn agrees to one-one conversion rate

BONN (R) — Bonn yielded to East German pressure Monday and agreed to convert East Germany's nearly worthless currency into West German marks at the highly favourable exchange rate of one-to-one.

Government spokesman Dieter Vogel said Chancellor Helmut Kohl's centre-right coalition had decided wages, pensions and some savings could be swapped at parity when the Germans enter a currency and economic union. But he stopped short of East Berlin's demand that all savings be converted at one-to-one.

"The government and coalition have agreed after intensive discussions... on the outlines of a treaty with East Germany to establish a currency union and an economic and

social community," Vogel said in a statement.

"The West German government's offer reflects its sense of responsibility for economic and social developments in both parts of Germany and the stability of the D-mark," Vogel said.

Bonn's draft treaty, the text of which was not released, will be put to East Germany's new conservative-led government in formal negotiations starting soon.

East Germany has said it wants talks this week on a treaty covering economic, social and monetary union.

Both countries see currency and economic union as a prelude to full political unification.

Bundesbank overruled

The Bonn government appeared to have overruled the objections of the Bundesbank, the country's powerful and fiercely independent central bank, which had argued that a general parity rate would be too generous and stoke inflation.

The Bundesbank took part in two days of talks that produced Monday's agreement.

Bonn will offer to convert personal cash and savings of up to 4,000 marks (\$2,350) at one-to-one, twice the level proposed by the Bundesbank several weeks ago. Savings above 4,000 marks will be swapped at two-for-one.

Vogel said Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU), its right-wing sister party the Christian

Social Union (CSU) and the Liberal Free Democrats (FDP) were determined to achieve economic and social union by July.

Although Bonn's offer represented a concession overall, some of the details appeared likely to cause controversy in the talks with East Germany.

East German Prime Minister Lothar de Maiziere's government, elected last month in the country's first free vote after the downfall of the communist regime, want all savings to be swapped at parity.

It was also said workers and pensioners should be compensated for planned scrapping of subsidies and price controls on basic necessities as East Germany introduces a free-market system.

However, Vogel said that while wages would be converted at one-for-one, they would not be raised from current levels to compensate East Germans for higher prices. West Germans earn far more than East Germans even at parity rates.

Pensions will be raised to West German levels, meaning that workers will get a maximum of 70 per cent of their final net income after 45 years' service. Vogel said Bonn would make sure no pensioners were worse off after currency union.

The debts of East German companies would be converted into Deutschmarks at two-for-one.

The East mark currency trades on the black market at around five to one.

Have and have-not nations battle over trade, politics

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Have-not countries will try this week to convince wealthier states that simply developing open markets will not turn their debt-ridden economies around — they need international help.

The U.N. General Assembly's five-day special session on economic cooperation that opens Monday will hear nearly every nation in the world attempt to steer future development programmes in its direction.

"Developed countries are trying to convince the developing countries that if they put their house in order everything will fall into place," said Enrique Ter Horst, a U.N. assistant secretary-general for development research.

"But those developing nations who have seen commodities prices fall for 10 years and have a high debt feel no internal policies will do the trick," he added.

"Actually both sides are right... but it is no coincidence that for the last 10 years over 70 countries have been suffering from the same symptoms," he said.

Arguments on a final declaration, which is no-binding, are

nevertheless being taken seriously by the assembly — and by the United States, which reluctantly agreed to take part and whose assent is considered important.

As the largest single foreign aid contributor, the United States is not entirely happy with any of the three draft declarations, from Bolivia for the non-aligned countries, from Canada and from Ireland for the European Community (EC).

"There is always a tendency to believe that the developing world needs to have too much delivered too rapidly without enough concern about domestic policy," said U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering.

Keeping to one side in discussions so far are Eastern European nations, who have recently announced radical economic changes, and according to U.N. studies, are expected to divert some resources from Latin America in the short term.

"They are not insisting their policies be endorsed or that the financing be necessarily promoted by the United Nations," said U.N. Assistant Secretary-General Goran Ohlin.

And East Germany, whose

Ambassador Siegfried Zachmann in the past has been a vocal spokesman in U.N. debates, is staying close to West Germany this week.

East Berlin's new right-wing economic cooperation minister, Hans-Wilhelm Ebeling, is flying to New York with his West German counterpart, Juergen Warnke, aboard a Bonn government aircraft in the first such joint international mission. They will coordinate speeches and appear at a joint press conference.

However, Ter Horst believes the "main challenge" of the special session is to integrate into the world economy nations in Africa and Latin America which have benefited the least from a revival of world economic growth and trade.

"Most of these countries today have moved from having unviable economies to being unviable societies," and are selling everything at any price to service the debt, he said.

"They are unable to think in long-term concepts and address their immediate survival — or their people, like their resources, will continue walking from south to north."

Power rationing cripples many Philippine firms

MANILA (Agencies) — The government cut power to 300 major buildings in Manila Monday as part of a new energy rationing scheme aimed at dealing with debilitating daily power shortages that are undermining national economic development.

Trading at Manila's twin stock exchanges went on, but banks cut working hours while offices with power generators maintained only skeleton staff levels, including multinationals in Makati, the country's financial centre.

Under the scheme worked out by government and the private sector, 302 government and commercial buildings which consume 100 kilowatts a day agreed not to use power from the national grid for five Mondays starting April 23 to May 28.

Officials said the rationing would enable the state-owned National Power Corp. to pump water into reservoir to guarantee electricity for the rest of the work week.

Factories, which have a separate voluntary power rationing programme, are not covered by the scheme. Restaurants, hotels and shopping malls using generators were operating normally.

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Aurelio Periquet said businessmen backed the government's plan to ration power, but he said: "This will have a serious effect on investors."

"The country is on the skids," said Roy Nicolas, an analyst at Belsion Securities. "The brokers might as well go back to farming since there is nothing happening in the bourses."

The power breakdowns have threatened to stall the country's economic development, already set back by last December's sixth and bloodiest army coup attempt against Aquino.

Central Bank Governor Jose Cuisia said last week the Philippine real growth target of six per cent this year would have to be

revised because of the effects of the serious power problem.

The private think-tank, Centre for Research and Communications, said growth this year might fall to about four per cent from last year's 5.6 per cent because of the power crisis.

The daily power outages affecting homes and offices last up to six hours daily.

Among the plans of the Task Force on Energy is a four-day work-week for five consecutive weeks for all government employees and selected private firms.

Homes and commercial establishments will continue to experience a series of two-hour electricity outages during the day.

Electricity in factories is being cut off one day a week for four hours starting 5 p.m. in a scheme euphemistically called a "voluntary curtailment programme," wherein owners are given a choice on which day they would like power to be shut off.

Committee officials said that these factories face an eight-hour electricity cut one day a week in case the energy crisis worsens.

Blame

The Aquino administration has blamed the power crisis on a drought and typhoons that damaged major electric plants. The last typhoon struck more than a year ago.

But major businessmen blame alleged incompetence in the Aquino administration for the power crisis, which they say is discouraging foreign investment despite government claims to the contrary.

National Power Corporation President Ernesto Abotix said his office had foreseen the shortage since Aquino assumed the presidency in 1986. He said his proposals for alternative energy sources have not been approved by the executive.

On Sunday, Aquino told a



Corazon Aquino

nationwide radio broadcast that the economy had boomed because foreign investments came in and businessmen began to have confidence in her government.

"Our economy is surging forward because of our newfound freedom," Aquino said.

She urged all rebel forces to surrender "so that you can benefit from our progress that we all are experiencing."

Moscow hints it could pay farmers more

MOSCOW (R) — Moscow hinted Monday that it could pay farmers more for grain and other crops this year to stimulate production but told consumers that the cost of fruit and vegetables would have to reflect supply and demand.

The suggestion was made by Vladimir Nikitin, chairman of the Commission for Food and Procurement, in the clearest sign yet of government determination to crack down on the setting of prices, many kept artificially low for decades.

Nikitin told the Communist Party daily Pravda procurement prices for grain and other crops would be reviewed in the coming harvest in what was seen as a move to increase production.

Soviet harvests have for years been dogged by shortages caused by poor weather and transport problems, but Nikitin said prospects for this year's winter-sown crop looked good.

Crop problems have made the Soviet Union the world's biggest grain importer and have caused discontent because bad harvests mean less for animal feed and longer queues for scarcer meat.

The Council of Ministers will review the procurement price of grain and several other crops in this harvest," said Nikitin. "But prices for potatoes, vegetables, fruit and berries will take into account the forces of supply and demand."

Complete overhaul

Nikitin gave no other details of the price review. An increase in procurement prices is seen by experts here as part of an eventual overhaul of food prices, now heavily subsidised.

But there are growing signs that an ambitious package of economic reforms, under study by President Mikhail Gorbachev and his advisory council, has run into trouble and will be delayed.

Officials have said the package will include laws on private enterprise, banking, foreign investment, the breakup of state monopoly powers, taxation and price reforms.

"There are so many conflicting signals coming out on the economic reform," said one Western diplomat. "But any change in procurement prices, any increase, would be a major component of price reform."

He said the reform now appeared to be in trouble, adding it was unclear where procurement price increases would fit in with the programme. "Not long ago it was urgent, drop everything for reform. Now there seem to be major delays."

Ivan Laptev, chairman of one of two houses of parliament, said last week the reforms would be introduced "at the end of the current session, or the beginning of the autumn session."

The package originally had



Mikhail Gorbachev

been due to be presented by May 1. The current session of parliament ends on May 25, and no date has been set for the opening of the autumn session.

President Gorbachev said Thursday his top advisers had ordered further revision in the package after two days of discussions marked by disagreements.

Nikitin said the winter wheat crop was generally in good shape, with less acreage than usual lost to bad weather and other problems.

"The sowing of winter wheat has survived winter a lot better than in recent years," he said.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Monday, April 23, 1990
Central Bank official rates

U.S. dollar	Buy	Sell	French franc	117.8	118.5
Pound Sterling	670.0	674.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	425.4	428.0
Deutschemark	1097.0	1103.6	Dutch guilder	251.7	253.8
Swiss franc	395.7	398.1	Swedish crown	109.4	110.1
	449.7	452.4	Italian lira (for 100)	33.9	34.2
			Belgian franc (for 10)	191.4	192.5

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midday on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

One Sterling	1.6355/65	U.S. dollar	
One U.S. dollar	1.1615/25	Canadian dollar	
	1.6900/65	Deutschemarks	
	1.9075/85	Dutch guilders	
	1.4900/10	Swiss francs	
	35.03/08	Belgian francs	
	5.6890/6940	French francs	
	1244/1245	Italian lire	
	157.60/70	Japanese yen	
	6.1525/75	Swedish crowns	
	6.5625/75	Norwegian crowns	
	6.4470/4520	Danish crowns	
One ounce of gold	375.60/376.00	U.S. dollars	

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — Heavy selling in some leading industrial stocks pushed Australia's share market to a sharply weaker close. The All Ordinaries Index ended 8.9 points down at 1,483.2.

TOKYO — Share prices closed broadly down but off their lows in extremely thin trading as pre-holiday caution and worries about Wall Street declines drove players to the sidelines. The Nikkei Index closed 156.37 points down at 29,679.07.

HONG KONG — Consolidation after last week's strong performance kept trading in a narrow range and the Hang Seng Index shed 10.44 points to 3,056.86.

SINGAPORE — Prices fell further in the afternoon to close sharply lower on continued liquidation in quiet and thin trading. The Straits Times Industrial Index fell 15.95 points to 1,504.61.

BOMBAY — Prices recovered from a weak start to finish higher. The Bombay Stock Exchange rose 5.21 points to 792.57. The National Index gained 1.70 to 419.76.

FRANKFURT — Plans for a broad swap rate of one-to-one in German monetary union further depressed a jittery market. The Dax index closed down 46.83 points at 1,837.50.

ZURICH — The Zurich stock exchange was closed Monday for a local holiday. Trading resumes Tuesday. On Friday, the All-Share SPI Index closed 3.1 points higher at 1,070.

PARIS — French share prices ended near their lows for the day in quiet trading, reacting to a sharp drop on Wall Street and profit-taking after a strong rally Friday. The CAC-40 Index ended 39.55 points lower at 2,089.77.

LONDON — Shares closed sharply lower in depressed trading after U.K. money data and a steep loss on Wall Street discouraged investors. The FTSE Index ended 27.9 points lower at 2,159.2.

NEW YORK — Wall Street stocks showed deep losses across the board amid investor concern about recent bond price losses and chance of an increase in U.S. interest rates. The Dow was off 34.24 points at 2,661.71 at 1700 GMT.

Output commitment eludes OPEC

NICOSIA (R) — No member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has so far committed itself to cutting its crude output, the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) reported.

The Nicosia-based oil industry newsletter said market rumours that "Saudi Arabia was to cut output by 400,000-500,000 barrels per day (BPD) were without foundation."

OPEC announced last week that it will hold an urgent meeting of its market monitoring committee on May 2 in Geneva and the news put a floor under sagging world spot oil market prices.

Excess output by Gulf Arab members of OPEC coupled with weak seasonal demand pushed prices almost \$6 down since the beginning of this year.

Oil ministers of OPEC's big Gulf producers, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), met in Jeddah last week to discuss the weak prices in the market.

The newsletter said some OPEC heads of state were also involved in behind the scene discussions.

"MEES understands that the objective of current OPEC consultations is to secure agreement on an OPEC-wide temporary production cutback to steady the market during what is left of the second quarter between the beginning of May and the end of June."

The newsletter said there would be no discussion on quota or ceiling numbers, and the cuts — if there were to be any — would be voluntary and across-the-board.

"It is emphasised that such an agreement should be arrived at on a voluntary basis, in an atmosphere free of political pressures and efforts to impute blame for overproduction."

The newsletter added that OPEC states aim to complete the broad lines of the agreement before May 2, so that the meeting itself would be brief — merely to ratify a finalised deal.

It said preliminary soundings indicate that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members in OPEC — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar — would be prepared to go along with a five per cent reduction from actual present output on an across-the-board basis.

Five per cent amounts to 1.2 million BPD assuming OPEC output at 24 million BPD, MEES said.

The newsletter added that other members of OPEC "would no doubt favour a bigger cut — up to 10 per cent is being mentioned in some circles — and a more selective pattern of allocation, putting the emphasis on those who are producing over quota."

MEES said the question of quotas for the second half could be left for discussion at the end-June regular conference.

HOROSCOPE NOT RECEIVED

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"The networks speed millions of dollars to get my attention. How much do YOU spend?"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DUWNE

YEASS

BARJEB

ANTUSE

Print answer here: THEY

Saturday's Jumbles: EMPTY DAISY BODICE VIRILE

Answer: Their relative who was known for his singleness must have been this — VERY "CLOSE"

(Answers tomorrow)

THE Daily Crossword by Virginia L. Yates

ACROSS

1 Miss

5 Rocky ridges

10 Quip

14 Moon title

15 "Dallas" matrilarch

16 Ace

17 Prod to action

20 Cuts apart

21 Addresses

22 Rumpie

24 Explosive devices

25 Moss Hart's "One"

28 1049

29 WWII agency

30 Status —

33 "Utopia" author

35 Clod

37 Financially sale

38 Dying danger

42 Thick fabric

43 Elation

45 Up and doing

46 Alone

48 Sault — Marie

49 Prescriptions for short

50 Conceit

51 Moll's guy

52 Kind of poker

54 Season the popcorn again

57 Snap

61 Doubly beset

65 Provokes

66 Cuomo of NY

67 Louver

68 Auld lang —

69 Punish in a way

70 Fair prof.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

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24 Explosive devices

25 Moss Hart's "One"

Ethiopians turn attention to world championships

LONDON (R) — Ethiopia's elite marathon runners, who enjoyed mixed fortunes in Sunday's Rotterdam and London events, turn their attention now to next year's Third World championships.

Abebe Mekonnen and Tesfaye Dadi finished second and third respectively in Rotterdam Sunday. But Belayneh Densimo, who set the world best of two hours six minutes 50 seconds in Rotterdam two years ago, dropped out in his London debut.

The London and Rotterdam marathons were the last of the major northern spring marathons and the Ethiopians will now return home.

"It's a little tiring," coach Tolosa Kotsa said last week. "They'll all rest and after that they start preparations for the world championships."

Ever since Abebe Bikila padded barefoot through the warm Roman night to win the 1960 Olympic marathon gold, Ethiopians have been to the forefront of world distance running.

Bikila became the first man to retain the Olympic title in Tokyo on 1964 and he was succeeded as champion four years later by

compatriot Mamo Wolde.

But in recent years the Ethiopians' efforts have been largely thwarted by their country's politicians, who have boycotted three of the last four Olympics.

Kotsa, who finished fourth in the Moscow games 10,000 metres behind his compatriot Miruts Yifter, was a victim of the 1984 boycott.

Disillusioned, he turned to coaching and now concentrates on the 5,000 and 10,000 runners while Negussie Roba coaches the marathon exponents.

Kotsa accompanied Densimo and Dereje Nedi to London this year while Roba travelled with Mekonnen and Dadi to Rotterdam.

Stopping frequently to consult with Densimo, as the world's fastest marathon runner relaxed on his hotel bed, Kotsa outlined in an interview the Ethiopians' preparation.

Kotsa said the selectors selected a squad after watching the Abebe Bikila memorial marathon, the armed force marathon and the police force marathon.

"We pick three groups of runners, including an elite squad of

10 to 15 people. There is also a second group and a third group of youngsters. From these groups we select two or three of the best athletes for the Tokyo, Rotterdam and London marathons."

"They undergo three months' special training in the high altitude of the capital city Addis Ababa," he said.

For two months the runners cover 160-180 kilometres a week in training, reducing the distance in the last month to concentrate on speed work.

A fresh squad will be selected this year after the three local marathons and preparation for the Tokyo world championships will start in earnest in September.

Kotsa was prophetically pessimistic about his runners' chances in Sunday's race.

"It's too cold for us," he said, looking out of the window at the rain pelting down on the London streets.

The weather had not relented Sunday and the cold and the wet forced Densimo to withdraw shortly after the halfway mark with ankle and tendon injuries.

Aguilera wins Nice Open

NICE, France (R) — Juan Aguilera of Spain continued his climb back towards the top of world tennis with a three-set victory over Frenchman Guy Forget in the final of the \$260,000 Nice Open Sunday.

Aguilera, ranked in the world's top 10 six years ago, won a sterile, rain-interrupted match played almost entirely from the baseline 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

So unadventurous was the play from both men that virtually every point was decided on unforced errors.

Aguilera made a lot in the first set as Forget went into a 5-0 lead but then the Spaniard steadied and waited for the Frenchman to crumble slowly.

"I was a bit nervous at the start and he began very strongly," Aguilera said. "But later I decided to be more patient and I think that changed it. I was able to win the points from the back of the court."

The crowd spent as much time looking up at the heavens to check the imminence of the next downpour as they did watching the match on centre court.

A.C. Milan shows brave face

By Reuters

A.C. MILAN, their Italian soccer league title hopes all but shattered, are refusing to dwell on Sunday's controversial defeat at Verona, during which their coach and three players were sent off.

"We have already forgotten this match. Now we're thinking about the Italy Cup," club manager Adriano Galliani said.

Trainer Arrigo Sacchi, Dutch international Marco Van Basten and Frank Rijkaard and defender Alessandro Costacurta, were all dismissed by Sicilian referee Rosario Lo Bello.

Milan, who had been leading 1-0 at halftime finally went down 2-1, allowing arch-rivals Napoli to pull two points clear at the top of the first division with only one game remaining.

"We promised each other not to talk about the match, nor the title, nor even Lo Bello and not even a 100 lire coin," Galliani said pointedly.

Two weeks ago a coin thrown from the crowd during a match against Atalanta hit Napoli's Brazilian striker Alemão.

The Italian football authorities

overturned the result of the match because of the incident, awarding Napoli a 2-0 win instead of a 0-0 draw. The result brought them level with Milan.

The Verona controversy overshadowed Dutch superstar Ruud Gullit's return to Milan after 11 months sidelined through injury. The match went Verona's way in the half hour Gullit was on the field.

Gullit said: "We want to win everything and we still have several possibilities." Milan will be defending their European Cup title in Vienna on May 23 against Portugal's Benfica and they meet Juventus in the Italy Cup second leg Wednesday.

Napoli need only to draw at home to Lazio next Sunday to clinch the league title after a fine 4-2 victory inspired by captain Diego Maradona at Bologna.

Dutch champions PSV Eindhoven also allowed rivals Ajax Amsterdam a clearer run to the title, crashing 4-1 at Fortuna Sittard.

"The club is finished... we gave away the championship and we have only ourselves to blame," manager Kees Ploegman told reporters after the match.

PSV, who have won the championship for the past four seasons, are level with Ajax on points, but the Amsterdam club, who drew at the weekend, have a game in hand with two weeks of the season to go.

PSV still have a chance of winning the Dutch Cup when the club meets Vitesse in Wednesday's final.

In Spain, Real Madrid, who have already secured the title, broke the Spanish goal scoring record by notching up 97 goals this season — one more than Barcelona's tally in 1958-59.

Welsh manager John Toshack said that with three games still to play he hoped his side would score 100.

Top scorer Hugo Sanchez knocked in two goals in Real's 3-3 draw with Logrones to make his total Europe's best at 35.

The Mexican said his ambition was to beat Telmo Zarra's Spanish scoring record of 36 for Athletic Bilbao in 1950-51.

In France, all-conquering Marseille have gone through their worst week since the start of the season.

The French champions, knocked out of the European Cup by Benfica Wednesday, had to hand league leadership back to Bordeaux on Saturday when they lost 2-1 at Paris St. Germain.

But, with four rounds to go in the French league Marseille have a game in hand and hope to reverse their fortunes on Wednesday when they travel to St. Etienne for a postponed match.

Also with four rounds to play, Bayern Munich look to be cruising to the Bundesliga title after stretching their lead at the top to five points despite a goalless draw with Fortuna Duesseldorf.

With the title race virtually over, attention has switched to the relegation battle which usually includes Hamburg, a power in Europe at the start of the 1980s. The northerners have never been out of the Bundesliga.

Hamburg greatly improved their position with a 3-0 win over Borussia Moenchengladbach. But they are still one of four clubs on 25 points above bottom-placed Homburg, who are doomed to second division soccer next season.

Seles beats Maleeva

LARGO, Florida (R) — Monica Seles of Yugoslavia won her third successive tournament with an emphatic 6-1, 6-0 rout of Bulgarian Katerina Maleeva Sunday in the final of the \$225,000 Largo Open women's tennis tournament.

Seles, ranked third in the world, capped off a week of dominating performances with her win over the fourth-seeded Maleeva. The 16-year-old Seles lost only 10 games in her five matches here and needed only 54 minutes to settle the final.

"I wasn't missing many balls," said Seles, who extended her winning streak to 15 straight matches. "I know Katerina is a good clay court player and I was prepared to stay out there a long time. I just didn't make any mistakes."

Seles will take her winning streak to Rome for next month's Italian Open, where she will be up against the likes of Steffi Graf, Martina Navratilova and exciting newcomer Jennifer Capriati.

Maleeva, the fourth seed, said the top-seeded Seles lifted her game in Sunday's final.

"The way she played today was not like she played in previous matches," said Maleeva, who beat French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez of Spain in the semifinals. "That happens quite often, a player raises her game."

Seles hit 30 winners to just nine for Maleeva, while the Bulgarian had twice as many errors.

Langer wins Madrid Open

MADRID, Spain (AP) — Bernhard Langer of West Germany shot a 5-under-par 67 Sunday to win the Madrid Open despite a course-record 61 by Brett Ogle of Australia.

Langer's total of 18-under-par 271 gave him a one-stroke victory over Australia's Rodger Davis.

Davis knocked in a 60-foot putt for an eagle on the par-5, 15th hole en route to a 66.

Ogle finished third at 272, while Sweden's Magnus Sunesson, the third-round co-leader with Langer, slipped to a 70 and a 273 total for fourth place, his best finish as a professional.

Langer's brilliant iron play earned him four birdies in the first eight holes. But he missed a 5-foot putt on the ninth for a bogey and fell into a tie with playing partner Sunesson, out in 33 like Langer, and Ogle, whose remarkable final score had just been posted on the leader board at the ninth hole.

Davis, who was out in 32 and playing directly in front of Langer, was only one shot back.

Langer birdied the 11th and 15th holes and needed both of them, as the eagle by Davis on the 15th had put him into a share of the lead before the West German star got to the 15th.

On the 18th, Langer's drive landed off the fairway in the right rough in front of several trees. Langer asked for "line-of-sight" relief because a television tower was blocking his path to the green.

Langer was given a free drop

that enabled him to get off his second shot with a full swing. Had he not been given the free drop, Langer said his backswing would have been impeded by a tree.

Langer collected the winner's check of \$75,000 from the total purse of \$454,000. It was his 21st European tour victory.

Ogle, who scored his first European tour victory three weeks ago in France, collected nine birdies and an eagle in shattering the record of 63 for the 6,981-yard, par-72 Puerta De Hierro golf club course. The record was set in 1980 by Seve Ballesteros of Spain, who failed to make the halfway cut this year.

Ogle ran off five birdies over the first eight holes in carding a 31 for the front nine. After that, he had birdies on the 11th and 18th holes before his eagle on the 15th, where he hit a seven-iron to within five feet.

He knocked in a 15-foot putt on the par-3, 17th, then hit a seven-iron to within 15 feet on the par-5, 605-yard 18th and got down in two.

The score also equalled the European tour record for 11-under-par for a par-72 course set by Roger Chapman of England in 1986 and matched by Jose Maria Canizares of Spain in 1987, both at the high-altitude crans-sur-sierre course in Switzerland.

"It's a pity that you can't play golf like this every day," Ogle said with a smile.

Australian wins GGO

GREENSBORO, North Carolina (AP) — Australia's Steve Elkington won the Greater Greensboro Open (GGO) Sunday, shooting at sizzling 31 on the back nine for a 6-under-par 66 and his first championship victory in three years.

Elkington rallied from seven shots behind Mike Reid, the third-round leader who couldn't muster a strong enough challenge.

"A long way back in the tournament, I was 4-over-par on my first nine holes and I made a long way back from there," he said.

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Mobs attack police in Kathmandu; 10 killed

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Mobs attacked police throughout the city Monday, accusing them of failing to provide law and order since democratic reforms were instituted two weeks ago. At least 10 people were killed in the clashes.

Six policemen were beaten to death and four civilians were killed when police opened fire at several places in the city, witnesses and doctors said. At least 72 people were hospitalised with injuries.

It was the worst violence since police opened fire on pro-democracy demonstrators on April 6. Witnesses said scores were killed in that clash two weeks ago, but the government reported 10 people had died nationwide.

The April 6 clash prompted King Birendra to lift a ban on opposition parties, one of the key demands of a burgeoning pro-democracy movement. Last week, the pro-democracy movement culminated in the dissolution of the country's non-party parliament. A new opposition-led coalition government was formed and multiparty elections are planned.

But the capital was rent by new clashes Monday between police and protesters. The trouble started when several hundred men marched toward the royal palace, with a pushcart carrying three unconscious and bloody men.

The crowd beat the three men, claiming the men were police officers who belonged to an outlawed right-wing gang once allied with the monarchy.

Two of the men died and were identified as policemen after their bodies were brought to Bir Hospital, where the third man was in serious condition. His identity was not immediately known.

The mobs said the three men were members of Mandale, a group of that once supported the

monarchy and used to clash with student opposition groups. Mandale went underground after Birendra banned it in 1979 because of its reputed penchant for violence.

Since the country's democratic reforms began two weeks ago, residents have blamed Mandale for an outbreak of looting, mugging and arson.

Some members of the crowd marching on the palace Monday chanted, "Birendra, thief, leave the country."

The procession was halted by police, who seized the three unconscious men from the crowd. Police opened fire around the procession in central Kathmandu and at several other points in the city. Four civilians who died of bullet wounds were brought to Bir Hospital, but there was no word on whether they were part of the procession or were shot at other locations.

Four policemen were beaten to death by a mob that attacked a police station in western Kathmandu's Teku neighbourhood, according to a reporter who witnessed the killings and spoke on condition of anonymity.

He said police at Teku initially fired tear gas, then gunshots in the air and finally fired bullets toward the crowd. It was not known if there were any casualties among the crowd at Teku.

Crowds were seen attacking at least six other police stations. One government building was set afire, and a group of young men seized a fire engine and drove jubilantly around Bir Hospital flashing "V" signs for victory.

Of the 72 people injured, 24 had bullet wounds, according to doctors at Bir Hospital and Teaching Hospital. One doctor said 14 others were suffering from stab wounds inflicted by the mob, who accused them of belonging to Mandale.

The rest had been beaten or



King Birendra

injured in the stampede as crowds dispersed, the doctors said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Police imposed a curfew in Kathmandu. By late Monday afternoon, the city was tense but violence was subsiding.

Earlier Monday, irate residents beat 12 suspected Mandale members and then set fire to four police jeeps, accusing the police force of failing to protect them, a cabinet minister said.

When the minister, Yogi Prasad Upadhyay, and Nepal's top police official, Hem Bahadur Singh, went to scene of the beatings, they were surrounded and detained by hundreds of people. The crowd forced the officials to address a public meeting and later pounded their jeep.

Upadhyay promised to investigate the Mandale, whose name means "group" in the Nepali language. Its members are called Mandales.

The mob which surrounded Upadhyay and the police chief accused the police force of harbouring Mandale supporters.

Millions rally to show concern for planet

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Tens of millions of people rallied around the globe for Earth Day 1990 in a massive outcry to defend the threatened planet.

What began as an exercise in ecological awareness on U.S. university campuses in 1970 turned on its 20th anniversary Sunday into a worldwide display of concern over the future of mother nature.

In cities from Tokyo to New York to San Francisco, tens of thousands gathered in parks to listen to music and speeches. Organisers in Boston had expected only 50,000 people for a concert and environmental fair on the banks of the Charles River, but more than 100,000 showed up.

Politicians, ecologists and Hollywood stars joined a huge rally in Washington aimed at sparking a new decade of environmental activism. Police said some 125,000 people jammed a mall between the Capitol and the Washington Monument.

"You can change things. We must change things," actor

Tom Cruise, who opened the event, told the crowd.

Smaller gatherings were held in thousands of communities around the world.

In the ancient Indonesian city of Jogjakarta, environmentalists gathered to read poetry and plant trees. Hundreds of schoolchildren planted roses and jasmine at a park in Islamabad and Japanese divers pulled garbage from the ocean.

Organisers estimated that at least 180 million people in 140 countries participated in some way in Earth Day events.

"The purpose of the day was to launch a decade of the environment, to expand the support of existing organisations and generate a new generation of young activists," said Teresa McGlashan, international coordinator for Earth Day 1990.

"I think it went much, much beyond what any of us ever would have expected, especially internationally. It just had a snowball effect and went far beyond what we guessed might happen," she said, summing

up more than a year of international organising from a storefront office in Palo Alto, California.

In New York, more than 18,000 environmentally conscious New Yorkers jammed Times Square to listen to speeches and dance to instrumental new age music. At least 500,000 attended a concert in Central Park.

U.S. President George Bush, on a fishing vacation in Florida, said at a ceremony timed to coincide with Earth Day that he would push for protection of coral reefs along the state's coast.

More than 90 environmental groups hosted Japan's biggest Earth Day festival, on Tokyo's Yamanote Line, or "dream island," constructed on landfill. The entrance fee was 10 used cans per person.

In Brazil's southern city of Curitiba, ecologists marked a minute of silence in memory of rubber tapper Chico Mendes, who was murdered in December 1988. Mendes had fought to

preserve Brazil's Amazon rain forest against clearing and burning.

"Brazil's Amazon is the last great tropical reserve in the world," said Brazilian ecologist Orlando Valverde in Rio de Janeiro. "Here in Rio we must lead the fight to preserve the Amazon. To destroy it would bring devastating consequences to the world."

In the Amazon state of Para, 120 species of trees were planted.

Hong Kong residents paraded through the concrete-bound colony to a carnival in Kowloon Park, a grassy knoll until authorities last year covered most of it with cement.

The one disappointment of the day was the failure of U.S., Soviet and Chinese climbers to reach the top of Mount Everest. Mountaineers representing each of the three nations had planned to reach the summit simultaneously in a gesture of peace and to emphasise the need to clean up the environment.

COLUMN

Model declares love for Trump

NEW YORK (AP) — Model Marla Maples has declared her love for Donald Trump on national television, but declined to characterise her relationship with the developer whose billions are in the sights of his estranged wife. Maples, said to be the "other woman" in the much-discussed divorce case of Donald and Ivana Trump, spoke during a recent interview. She would not say how she met Trump, nor would she comment on a reported confrontation she had with Mrs. Trump in Aspen, Colorado, where the Trumps vacationed last year. "Only the two of them know what really went wrong with their marriage. But I'm not the reason for that marriage having problems," she said.

Nicholson announces birth of daughter

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jack Nicholson and actress Rebecca Broussard have announced the birth of a girl. Lorraine Broussard Nicholson was born at Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre, said publicist Paul Wasserman. Miss Broussard plays a secretary to Nicholson's detective in his movie The Two Jakes. The couple met on the set of the Chinatown sequel, due for release in August. Nicholson, who won Oscars for performances in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and Terms of Endearment, most recently played the Joker in Batman.

Brain-dead infant gives life to sister

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Timothy and Paula Whisman thought their hands would be full with two demanding infants by now. Instead, their arms are aching to hold one newborn daughter, who clings to life because of her twin brother's heart. Alison Page Whisman was born on April 10 with a fatal heart condition. Her brother, Tyler, was born brain dead minutes later. Doctors saved the girl's life by giving her Tyler's heart in what they believe is the first heart transplant between infant twins.

Liz Taylor in stable condition

SANTA MONICA, California (AP) — Actress Elizabeth Taylor remains hospitalised in stable condition with pneumonia, her publicist says. Miss Taylor, 58, who was admitted on April 9 with a sinus infection to Daniel Freeman Hospital, was transferred to St. John's Hospital and Health Centre because of a persistent fever and pneumonia. Inquiries to the hospital were referred to Chen Sam's public relations firm in New York City, where Taylor spokeswoman Lisa Del Favaro said: "She's stable. She's OK. We have nothing else to say." The actress had a nearly fatal bout of pneumonia in 1961, the year she won an Oscar for Butterfield 8.

African queen sculpture sells for record \$3.41m

NEW YORK (AP) — A 19th century African sculpture of a Bangwa queen fetched \$3.41 million, a record for a piece of tribal art sold at auction, Sotheby's announced. The 82.5-centimetre wooden figure of a regal, standing woman was bought by an anonymous private collector, said Laura Stewart, a spokeswoman for the auction house. The "Bangwa memorial figure of a royal titled wife" was sold at an auction of the African art collection of Harry A. Franklin, a Los Angeles dealer. A German explorer, Gustav Conrad, acquired the carving between 1897 and 1898 while travelling in one of the Bangwa kingdoms in what is now Cameroon, in West Africa. The figure represents a woman as Priestess of the Earth cult and mother of twins. She is shown dancing and singing the song of the Earth as she would at the funeral celebration for a deceased king. The Bangwa queen was a highlight of the first show of African art at the Museum of Modern Art in 1935. Surrealist artist Man Ray photographed it with a nude model in the 1930s. The previous auction record for a piece of tribal art was \$2 million for a Benin bronze head that was sold last year at Christie's in London.

Chinese premier in Moscow

MOSCOW (AP) — Chinese Premier Li Peng arrived in Moscow Monday on the first visit in 26 years by a Chinese head of government to the Soviet Union, China's longtime rival for leadership of the Communist world.

Li was met at the airport by Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov and Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

The four-day trip is intended to promote normal, friendly relations and an easing of border tensions at a time when both countries are confronted with serious internal problems.

"Li's visit to the USSR underscores the importance of continuing the Sino-Soviet dialogue at the summit level, which began a year ago and signalled the normalisation of relations between the two countries," Soviet News Agency TASS said.

The 61-year-old premier was expected to hold at least two rounds of talks with President Mikhail Gorbachev, who last May went to China in the first visit by a Soviet leader in three decades.

"I will be exchanging views with President Gorbachev, Chairman Ryzhkov and other comrades from the Soviet leadership on matters concerning bilateral relations and on major international issues of common concern," Li said at the airport.

The two sides are expected to sign an agreement on fostering bilateral trade and will lay down guiding principles on easing military confrontation along their 7,000-kilometre frontier.

TASS said both the Soviet Union and China have shown readiness to reduce troops deployed in the area of the Soviet-Chinese border and have agreed to a treaty on the reductions.

There are 500,000 Soviet and more than 1 million Chinese troops along the border.

Other subjects likely to be on the agenda for this summit are the war in Cambodia, where Moscow and Peking support opposing sides, and the situation in East Europe.

Li and Gorbachev may also discuss ethnic unrest, particularly among Muslim minority groups living on both sides of the Sino-Soviet border in Central Asia.

Cambodian rebels retake 3 government positions

ARANYAPRATHET, Thailand (Agencies) — Cambodian guerrillas said they overran three important government positions Monday in an attempt to retake Svay Chek, a strategic northwestern town reduced to charred rubble by fighting in recent months.

A force of some 2,000 guerrillas began attacking Svay Chek Sunday morning, said Ok Serei Sopheak, spokesman for the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KNPLF), one of two non-Communist factions in the three-party guerrilla alliance fighting the Phnom Penh government.

Western and guerrilla sources also have reported heavy fighting recently in three other provinces where the Communist Khmer Rouge guerrillas are operating. However, no details of the battles in the provinces of Monkol Borei, Kompong Thom and Kompong Speu were available. Kompong Thom is in central Cambodia and Kompong Speu to the west of Phnom Penh.

Ok Serei Sopheak said the KNPLF guerrillas Monday morning overran the villages of Treas,

Tas Moan and Don Pok, to the north of Svay Chek. They also had seized five other government positions around Svay Chek, he said.

He also claimed the guerrillas had carried out a commando raid inside the provincial capital of Siem Reap, a strategic crossroads some 50 kilometres east of the Thai border town of Aranyaprathet.

In their first-ever attack on the town, the guerrillas succeeded in destroying a fuel depot, Ok Serei Sopheak said.

The 38 guerrilla commandos were guided into Siem Reap by government defectors, he said.

The guerrillas say if they can retake Svay Chek they will have recovered all the territory they lost in a government counteroffensive that began in February.

Some 15,000 people lived in Svay Chek before it became the focus of heavy fighting. The town was burned to the ground after guerrillas attempted to retake it in early March. Guerrillas and Western sources say no buildings remain standing there.

Communist reformer wins free elections in Slovenia

ZAGREB, Yugoslavia (AP) — Communist reformer Milan Kucan scored a resounding victory in Slovenia's runoff presidential election as Yugoslavia held its first free, multiparty elections in half a century, according to the latest results Monday.

Almost four million voters in the northern republics of Slovenia and Croatia took part in Sunday's polls, considered crucial for the future of Yugoslavia's fragile, Communist-ruled federation.

In Slovenia, with almost all of the 1.1 million votes counted, Kucan comfortably led with 58.39 per cent. His opponent Jozef Pucnik, head of the centre-right five-party Demos Coalition trailed with 41.6 per cent of the votes.

In neighbouring Croatia, the reformed Communist Party — now named the Party for Democratic Change — was reported running neck-and-neck with the centre-right Croatian Democratic Union.

With less than a fifth of the votes in 81 constituencies counted, the union was leading in 39, and the Communists in 36.

The middle-of-the-road Coalition of National Accord was ahead in only six constituencies, according to preliminary figures released by the state electoral commission.

Some 80 per cent of Croatia's 3.5 million eligible voters had cast their ballots Sunday's for the 116-seat Chamber of Counties and the 80-seat Socio-Political

Chamber.

An additional vote was to take place in Croatia Monday for 160 seats in the Labour Chamber of the 356-seat state legislature.

Scheduled in two weeks is a second round of elections in constituencies in which no candidate won an outright majority during the first ballot.

Some 2,000 supporters of the Croatian Democratic Union gathered overnight in the Zagreb electoral district of Dubrava, the home of party leader Franjo Tudjman, to celebrate "the victory of the Croatian people."

"I am convinced we will win an absolute majority and that the union will form Croatia's first non-Communist administration" after the second round of elections, Tudjman said.

Demos and the Croatian Democratic Union are accused in the Communist-ruled state of Serbia of being extreme nationalists and of planning to secede from the rest of the country.

Tudjman, a former Yugoslav army general who spent a total of five years in jail for "counter-revolutionary activities," denies this, saying his party favours a system in which all six republics would have "full sovereign rights."

But observers generally agree that the traditional rivalry between Croatia and Serbia will almost certainly be exacerbated if Tudjman's party wins a majority in the Croatian parliament.

Pope returns from Czechoslovakia

ROME (AP) — Pope John Paul II, returning from a historic trip to Czechoslovakia, said Sunday night the Roman Catholic Church wants to help shape the new Europe.

"The church has something to say and something to give," as former Communist countries move toward democracy, Pope John Paul said.

While in Czechoslovakia, the Pope announced plans for an unprecedented European-wide meeting of bishops to discuss spreading the church's message across the continent.

Europe has about 1,000 of the world's 3,000 bishops. The synod apparently will map strategy to meet the Pope's vision of a Europe united on the basis of its Christian roots, rejecting the Communist concepts that prevailed in the East as well as the materialism of the West.

A Vatican spokesman also disclosed that the Pope would visit Cuba in December.

The pontiff's plane landed in Rome at about 11:05 p.m. (21:05 GMT), ending his first trip to Eastern Europe since the democratic revolutions in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Romania and Bulgaria.

As he was flying home, the Pope said his two-day trip was "very necessary at this moment."

"We hope it can open new doors to relations between the East and West and toward European unification," he said.

The pontiff ended his whirlwind two-day visit to Czechoslovakia in the evening, flying directly from the Slovak capital of Bratislava to Rome. Prime Minister Marian Calfa, who saw him off, said the visit had "strengthened the feeling of togetherness in all of us."

At an outdoor mass attended by several hundred thousand people shortly before his departure, the Pope lauded the perseverance of Roman Catholics and gave special thanks to Czechoslovakia's youth, who sparked the peaceful November revolution.

"I am thinking of the young people, who others tried to lead astray, but who did not lose their thirst for truth, justice and love, and who, in the light of such values, became the agents of recent changes," he added.

Romanian protesters call on Iliescu to quit

BUCHAREST (Agencies) — Hundreds of protesters barricaded themselves in downtown Bucharest Sunday night and called for the resignation of interim president Ion Iliescu.

The protesters, taking shelter behind wooden advertising panels, refused to leave the Central University Square where their demands were met. Several hundred police, including 120 riot troops equipped with plastic shields and batons, ringed the demonstrators but did not intervene.

The protest, which continued after midnight (21:00 GMT), culminated in a day of demonstrations by tens of thousands of people across the country. Rallies have become an almost daily occurrence as Romania heads its May 20 elections, the first free multiparty balloting in more than 50 years.

At least 70 political parties are expected to take part in the elections.

In the city of Oradea, representatives of Romania's 2.1 million ethnic Hungarians met to try to devise a unified platform for the elections.

The first congress of the Demo-

cratic Federation of Romanian Hungarians adopted a series of positions on minority rights, vowing to defend "those who have been threatened and endangered by their advocating such causes, be they a member of any minority or Romanian."

The congress has left the nomination of candidates to its local chapters and decided not to field a presidential candidate.

Much of its session was taken up with heated debate over relations with the National Salvation Front, the most powerful faction in the interim National Unity Council that is ruling Romania until the elections.

A radical wing of the congress, made up mainly of young delegates, alleged that some federation leaders had close ties to Salvation Front leaders who were members of the Communist Party under former dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

Speaker after speaker said there was no place in the federation's leadership for "reform Communists."

The congress set up a committee charged with contacting every Romanian political party and organisation to assess their posi-

tions before deciding whose presidential candidate to back.

The federation's chairman, Geza Domokos, said its electoral programme would deal "not only with the problems of the Hungarian minority but with those of the nation as a whole."

In Bucharest, the protesters wrote slogans in white chalk on the pavement, accusing the National Salvation Front of harbouring former Communists.

"Our unity here is a guarantee to save Romania from the biggest danger which is represented by the front," Nicolae Popescu, a student who belongs to the party-less movement, the organiser of the rally, told the Associated Press.

"The front represents the same danger which the Communist Party, assisted by the Red Army, represented after the war when Communists grabbed power," he said.

The protesters who blocked the university square were part of a 5,000-strong rally which earlier in the day marched to Romania's state television station and called for it to become independent from the government.

Iliescu, 60, a former Communist Party secretary who ran afoul of Ceausescu and was demoted to lesser jobs, is the front's candidate for president of Romania in the upcoming elections.

The front, which claims some 800,000 members, is widely seen as the main contender, drawing support mainly from industrial workers and former Communist Party members.

A major opposition figure said Sunday that fugitive members of Romania's secret police were making death threats against voters ahead of free elections.

Peasant Party leader Corneliu Coposu said voters in rural parts were being intimidated by former members of the Securitate secret police force which kept Ceausescu in power.

Meanwhile, Ion Ratiu, a wealthy industrialist who returned from 50 years in the exile to a bid for power on behalf of the Peasant Party, became the third, official presidential candidate.

Iliescu and National Liberal Party leader Radu Campeanu had already secured the 100,000 signatures of support required to register as an official candidate.

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